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@!@!@!@! Universal Pro Wrestling – “Power Play” (5/30/01)
(by Phil Rippa)

I was torn between the two new shows that popped up on the UPW webcast. The June show has the entire Guerrero family. But this show had MOTHERFUCKING Hoshikawa vs. Horseshu – a dream match on my computer screen. So I figured “Hell, the boss is on vacation for a week. I will review both.”

Thank God for the poor lighting because I don’t even want to dream what that shot of Roland Alexander would have looked like in natural light (Love ya Roland but that camera angle invaded a lot of people’s personal space.)

Donovan Morgan/Mike Modest (APW) vs. The Ultimate Army (Nathan Jones/John Heidenriech) (UPW)

Now, this is more like it for a Cross Promotional match. I have said it before and I will say it a million times over. Sometimes simple wrestling is the best wrestling. This match is a perfect example. A tale of the little wrestling tag team versus the giant power team. Jones and Big John have the clear advantage in size and they utilize this to dominate the early portions of the match. And since Morgan and Modest are both experienced enough, they know how to properly manipulate the match so their opponents “strengths” are emphasized (for example: feeding themselves for the big boots and the press slams.) You then move to the next portion of the match, which consists of the APW team working over Heidenriech’s leg (one of the 5 points of balance as Gordon Solie used to say). Big John earns some goodwill with me as he sells the knee for the rest of the match. Last time it was Nathan Jones who impressed me. This time it was Big John. I can’t wait for the match where both of them are “on” - if that is ever possible. Anyway, Morgan and Modest can’t put away Heidenriech and they make the mistake of not keeping him on the ground. So when he finally gets the hot tag to Jones, they know, you know and I know that they are in deep shit because they now have to breakdown another big guy and they need the opening to do so first. That opening never presents itself and a double chokeslam (the Ultimate Ride) later and the UPW wins one for the home crowd. Very nice indeed.

Big John sells the knee throughout the Ultimate Army promo too. That’s how you do it kids.

“Tempting” Devon Willis vs. B-Boy vs. Prodigy – Lightweight Championship

Oh Boy! How I love me some three-way dances. Prodigy is the champ while Devon Willis is a member of PHAT (Pretty Hot and Tempting) and B-Boy is amazingly still a part of the Manilla Thrillaz. This is your typical three-way spotfest and to add to that craazzzyyyy feeling, all the tag team partners (Andy Van Dam, Billy Kim and whoever the hell Willis’ partner is... umm... Erik... that’s his name) get involved and so there is some liberal double teaming. B-Boy becomes the new champ in an amazingly short match, which might be for the best considering no one had the chance to kill themselves trying to leap off the top of the building.

You've got your usual in-ring blathering here. (Actually, they are setting up the Josh Wilcox/Adam Pearce match that I was afraid was going to happen after the April show.)

We hit the Soul Train Dance Line Here. Fun if you are casting for Fosse. Bad for Phil who only has a limited number of hours in his life left. Damn High Blood Pressure.

Definition of Pain (Al Katraz/Bad Boy Basil) vs. G.A.Y. ("Super Cute" Preston Scott/"Ultra Hot" J.C.)

I really want to know what sort of work release program DOP is on that allows them to keep wrestling all the time. Oh that wacky California penal system. Hey, it's the convicts vs. the homosexuals. It's a subtle theme but I am here to point it out to you. Plus, it works in the context of this issue. Heck, Gorgeous and Young even bring bars of soap into the ring and drop them in front of DOP. I guess it ain't such a subtle theme. I would like to think that a member of the gay community wouldn't have the butt-ugly tattoos that Preston Scott does but it is more likely that I am not up on my homosexual street cred. Pretty forgettable match as these two teams don't really mesh well (Yikes! I promise you I meant nothing by that when I typed it). GAY has some of their standard comedy spots that they have to work into a match, thus, other factors – like actual psychology and transitions are sacrificed. Oh well.

"Shooter" Tony Jones (APW) vs. Jake Damien vs. Scotty Sabre – SoCal Championship
YES! Another three-way. UPW! UPW! UPW! Those are some tiny pants on Damien. Do you know, that on his website, Scott Sabre lists Johnny Grunge as a big influence? Oh boy. I know nothing about Damien so I will defer to Tim Noel "Jake is a former VA indie guy who has moved to Las Vegas...He's decent but somewhat limited (only 2 years in though)." I think that sums it up nicely. Onto the match and almost immediately we run into the problem of someone hitting their finisher with the first 180 seconds of the match. (Well, what are you going to win with now young Sabre?) We have the Power Twins interfering. We have Roland interfering and we got a whole lot of nothing. Jones retains.

Now we get to the part that I really care about. Rick Bassman hits the ring to talk about UPW's relationships with the WWF and Japan. He brings out Shinya Hashimoto and crew. (Hashimoto on American soil. DAMN YOU CALIFORNIA!!!! Well, we get Doug Williams and he will get all carry on your ass.) I love how there is one guy in the crowd who is marking out very loudly for Hash. Oh man does Hoshikawa look like he is ready to kick someone's teeth in. Anyhoo, Bassman brings out Samoa Joe. Joe runs down everyone, including the Zero One folks. Hashimoto tries to contain his laughter as Joe cuts a promo on him. So, Joe leaves and Hash and company start mouthing off about the good old US of A. ("American wrestlers SUCK!") That brings out the fine patriot, Horshu who accepts the challenge. And Horshu ON THE STICK! only makes this the greatest show ever.

Horshu vs. Naohiro Hoshikawa

Of course, the classy UPW announcers make lots of racial jokes to get over with the Internet audience. Hoshikawa basically waffles the hell out Horshu and the slaps the Fujiwara armbar on to get the submission win. Exactly as it should be. Hoshikawa going over easily. Hoshikawa

continues to work over Horshu, which brings out Tom Howard. THAT in turn, gets Hashimoto into the ring AND IT IS BREAKING DOWN IN SANTA CLARA, CALIFORNIA!!!!!! Bassman pimps the Zero-One PPV and I want tape even more now.

Big Time (Horshu/Tom Howard) vs. Hells Bells (Smelly/Mike Bell)

This was the regularly scheduled match that starts off as Hells Bells jump Howard and Horshu. I can believe that Howard looked good in Japan because he has been steadily watchable in all this UPW stuff and that was when he wasn't in the ring with one of the best wrestlers in the world. Big Time goes over with something, as this match was an afterthought for me after what had already happened and what was yet to come.

Super Dragon vs. Juventud Guerrera

Now, in theory, this should fucking rule but my Spidey sense is tingle as I seem to recall this might be another in the "Juventud mails it in because he hasn't gotten the sweet drugs and Russo didn't book him to win with a Tequila bottle" category. Well I will know in a few minutes. Oh yeah, those extra 15 pounds are all muscle.... riiigggghhtttt. God, these announcers are terrible. Not as bad as the Combat Zone guys but yikes. Figures that the lightning sucks for this match so I can't figure out what the fuck Super Dragon just did. (Anytime they go near the ropes or the corner, they disappear into the London Fog.) Well, yup, that was nowhere near as good as it was supposed to be. Went only about 6 minutes. Both guys had subpar performances – including a bunch of missed spots by Super Dragon (which the yutz announcers weren't afraid to hammer on instead of covering up. Ya know you still want to kayfabe the match as your calling it.)

The midnight chokers enjoy the segment that is here.

Keiji Sekoda vs. Chavo Guerrero, Jr.

Example of commentary - "Even though he used to come out to the ring with a Hobby Horse, his hobby is collecting victories in the ring." You can't make this stuff up. Sekoda busted out the Fit Finlay Rolling Slam so he continues to grow on me. He still has his rough spot – like it seems that his conditioning is right on par with Mark Shraeder's. That could be a product of the short matches that UPW has a history of running. Like this one, as Chavo wins with an ugly Brainbuster (and I don't mean nasty ugly. I mean ugly ugly.) Boy, we are burning off some of the goodwill from earlier in the card with the last couple of matches.

Hey, a Nova interview. Urge to kill... rising.

Los Cubanitos (Ricky Reyes/Rocky Romero) vs. The Urban Outlaws (Marshall & Mike Knox)
I think you will soon see, Phil Rippa – Urban Outlaw Apologist. Especially, in light of the fact that the APA is pretty broken down and Kendall is retired, I need a new big, Texan (or two) to jump on. Err.... Awwwww crap.... Oh well. Okay, Mike Knox just did the World's Greatest Outlaw tope. Number One and the Best! I still get Reyes and Romero confused but we all know that Rippa stands for moron in Italian. More working over the big guys leg. I got no problems repeating that several times. Professional Wrestling, Daddy! Man, Los Cubanitos do this great figure-four

dropkick thing that I think everyone will be stealing soon enough. Mike Knox is your de facto face in peril, which is really odd because I don't think he has ever worked for a hot tag before in his life. As I was watching this match I started to realize how many freakin' great U.S. Indy stars have busted out onto the scene in the last year – Low-Ki, American Dragon, Super Dragon, Ricky Reyes, B-Boy, The Maximo Brothers, Red, amongst others. And folks wonder why we support the Indy feds.

Damien Steele sports the fanny pack and spouts off. Doesn't anyone look in the mirror before they step through the curtain?

Mikey Henderson vs. Chuck Palumbo

FUCK! I forgot that this was the WCW talent enhanced show. SHIT! Sean O'Haire is on the card too. I should have quit when I was ahead. What was really annoying was on the rare occasion that I flipped over to WCW programming in the dying days, I always managed to catch Palumbo contribution to the fall. Now, he is crapping up the indy shows I watch too. He even does possibly the worst small package in the history of men in tights. Henderson tries to reign this bad boy in but that ain't going to save it. And that sleeper spot confirms it. We will skip ahead to the Jungle Kick and the pin. Samoa Joe and O'Haire hit the ring.

Adam Pearce vs. Josh Wilcox

Well this was a big train wreck. I am sure that Wilcox is glad that XFL career panned out. The former tight end throws some credible looking forearms and doesn't do the three-point stance but that is about the nice things I can say about him. He does the rest of the standard Reggie White wrestling offense. Of course, since he doesn't do the three-point stance, he has to win with something else. And what is the one other move that all ex-football players do... THE SPEAR!!!!!!!!!!!! Short and lcky.

Samoa Joe vs. Sean O'Haire – UPW Heavyweight Title

Someone explain to me how O'Haire's leapy, kicky style is more impressive than say, Bull Buchanan's? God, Samoa Joe is really great for someone who hasn't been in the business terribly long. This is decent as Joe continues the trend of working over the big man's leg. O'Haire, to his credit, sells the leg – albeit goofy. Well, he now he has completely stopped selling it. No more goodwill for you, Mr. O'Haire. What I don't have a problem with is Joe winning with a great looking Island Driver. Nowhere near as bad as it good have been and I think all credit goes to our island brother. Hey Sean, Marshall Knox can do the Swanton too and he is your size also. It ain't that impressive. Countdown to the Beulah Swanton: 5 days.

Ballard Brothers vs. Evolution (Nova/"The Future" Frankie Kazarian) – UPW Tag Team Championship Tourney Finals

Hmmm... that was odd. They seemed to clip the beginning of the match. I am realizing more and more that I and getting down on the overly chorographed exchanges that occur (in this example) in Nova matches. I mean they look good and there are some nifty moves but there is something to be said for hitting a clothesline, taking a moment to interact with the crowd and then doing the next move. Now, some of you might be thinking "Well, isn't that all that lucha is."

No and if that is what your impression of lucha is, then you need to watch a whole lot more of it. Send money to Alfredo. There is also a difference of working for one elaborate arm-drag as opposed to a four minute Llewelyn Sinclair produced wrestling sequence where everyone just happens to be in the right place at the right time and you push the boundaries of kayfabe breaking moves.. When I work that match with Nova, he will have to come up with something else to do because there is no way that I will be able to remember an entire sequence. The other problem/question I have is Nova booking his own matches? The reason I ask this is because every match I have seen of his in UPW has been overbooked in the most annoying of fashions. So I figure it is either Nova books his own matches or Bassman overbooks the mains of his cards and they just always have Nova in them. I mean, the disliking of the Gregory Hines stuff is a matter of taste, it doesn't mean that the match can't be good and be entertaining. The overbooking, though, is inexcusable.

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!@!@!@!@!@ Apex of Triangle Tournament- MOEBIUS- 4/14/2001:

(DEAN RASMUSSEN)

OH SWEET HOLY FUCK! MOEBIUS! DICK motherfucking TOGO! The Great Sasuke! SURVIVAL TOBITA! GYAOPPPPI!!!! More from the crafty young tapetrader, Scott Mailman. This is another one of those Orihara Trios Flight's of Fancy- as the King Of The Moebius Promotion will annually gather all of his scummy friends together and put on a wildly varying wrestling card- usually based on a trios concept, always involving some pretty ... questionable... talent at some point in the proceedings. Notice the use of the three shittiest workers from DDT on his TRIOS Tournament last year- Takegi, Exciting Yoshida, that crappy masked guy? MIKAMI, Sasaki and ANYBODY was right there . This one is better than the Trios Tournament though- as the end kicks in and the wrestling is all good throughout- or at least REALLY fucking weird- OR hell- you can at least take solace in that en lieu of having guys who really suck , they have guys who are wearing really funny outfits while they kinda suck. From the size of the crowd, I'm assuming Samurai TV and Orihara paid everyone a fine chicken sammich and a super BOSS Apex Of Triangle t-shirt.

Dick Togo/Hideki Nishida/NOSAWA vs. Takeshi Ono/Masao Orihara/KAW*KAW: Dick MOTHERFUCKING Togo! He fucking RULES. NOSAWA is beloved indie scum from last year and would be truly fine in this tourney one would hope. KAW KAW has the COOLEST mask with a... WHAT THE HECK?! Oriharas wins in 11 seconds over NOZAWA. Go figure. Dick Togo's team wrestles again later, so I think the Sleazy Indie/WCW Cruiserweight Tournament Bracketing is in effect. There looks to be an EMLL Japan team in the brackets and I'm assuming they didn't show up. Thus! THIS. Maybe. Ah who the fuck knows...

Survival Tobita/GYAOPPPPI/Chichibu Foot of Mountain and Mountain vs. NANIWA/ Sasuke the Great/ Relay Shonen:

(Chichibu Foot of the Mountain and Mounatin and Survival Tobita had a meeting.)

SURVIVAL TOBITA: I want to thank you for meeting me here at the Satahara Oh Memorial Interstate Rest Stop so we can discuss our future. I know that we have been at odds in the past- what with you wanting to destroy me and you sending the Lantern Ghost and his son to kill me.

CHICHIBU FOOT OF MOUNTAIN AND MOUNTAIN: Well, it was a big misunderstanding. We got some bad information up on the mountain from someone whom we THOUGHT was a reliable source that said that you wanted to stripmine the sacred mountain and sell us into slavery- but our source turned out to be Manhole Man v.2. He was just bitter about always being thwarted by your heroic efforts to save the people of Japan. Plus he was going through some tough times with Convenience Store Burglar. Seems that the Convenience Store Burglar and Gilgilgun were having a clandestine affair. Since Convenience Store Burglar is Manhole's boyfriend and Gil is his bestfriend, you can imagine how hurt he was. He was just lashing out.

SURVIVAL TOBITA: I see. That's very understandable. Even without the unfortunate turn of events surrounding Manhole Man v.2's attempt to have you kill me, I haven't exactly endeared myself to the subterranean Monster Underground lately. I just finished fighting the Driller and his boyfriend at a Kyoto storage facility and it was considered quite an affront since the Driller is a made man in the Monster World and all. With all that going on, such.... unfortunate situations... as these shall arise. I hope that the fact that we have cleared the air will make you more willing to help me. I am a bit desperate, I must admit.

CHICHIBU FOOT OF MOUNTAIN AND MOUNTAIN: That's in the past. Your problem- Hey! I'm all ears. Shoot.

SURVIVAL TOBITA: Well, Orihara- the millionaire eccentric from Moebius Corporation sent out a memorandum to all wrestlers in the Indie Wrestling Trailer Court. He is organizing a Battle Tournament with a grand prize of a very fine Roast Beef sammich and 100% Cotton Hanes Beefy-T version of the coveted Apex Of Triangle shirt. It is a fine sammich- complete with a fine horseradish sauce and assorted exotic pickle chips. The tournament will test the mettle of all the Independent wrestles that will have to defend the beloved soil of Japan at some point- one would think sooner or later. I figured that you were the most trustworthy of my opponents- what with Mokujin Ken freaking out and becoming a Republican (despite the fact they openly threaten his natural habitat, he said something about the need for less tolerance for criminals and "undesirables" in our society. I think he has lost his wooden mind ever since he finally got some at the Tokyo Arboretum.) and what with Automatic Warrior needing a new manifold and everything...

CHICHIBU FOOT OF MOUNTAIN AND MOUNTAIN: Say no more. I'll bring my friend GYAOPPI. He fights like a thousand men fighting a thousand men. He is fierce and of a singular focus- TO DESTROY! The only possible drawback is that he just can't actually... walk erect...

SURVIVAL TOBITA: Ah, my friendly mountain friend, that may be a problem! Let me check the sacred gold-leaf JAPANESE INDEPENDENT WRESTLING TOURNAMENT GOVERNMENT GUIDELINES rule book and see what it says about the subject of walking erect... lessee... "Mysteriousness of Brackets"... "Government Tassle limits"... "Continuation of Motegi's Career Rule Rescinded"... "The Goro Tsurumi- Ryama Go Accord of 1996"... "Mummy quota"...NOPE! We're good.

CHICHIBU FOOT OF MOUNTAIN AND MOUNTAIN: We will fight like a thousand suns burning out a thousand other suns!

(GYAOPPI wasn't the best idea. When he is flipped on his back by SASUKE THE GREAT, the great lizard becomes helpless and wide-open to Relay Shonen and SASUKE's attack. CHICHIBU FOOT OF MOUNTAIN AND MOUNTAIN and Relay Shonen had a spirited battle but CHICHIBU FOOT OF MOUNTAIN AND MOUNTAIN is susceptible to Relay Shonen's greatly improved Dropkick and piscada- as the use of a ring gave the Michinoku Pro regulars the great advantage. GYAOPPI had the other great disadvantage of being at the perfect height off the ground to suffer those high altitude dropkicks to the face and is easily pinned when he turned helpless onto his back again, allowing the easy and unnecessary diving headbutt for the pin. A fine battle indeed.)

Chi-Nen Hokkai/ Kazuya Yuasa/ Shiryu II vs. Ryuji Ito/ Daisuke Sekimoto/MEN'S Teioh: Oh yeah, the Big Japan Juniors team is called the MEN'S CLUB and they come out to incidental music from DALLAS and it rules. Ryuji Ito is getting thicker (possible the application of "ring polish"? Maybe he found a lady who can cook.) and both of these teams rock the match like a hurricane. Ito and Shiryu II take it to the mat lucha style and it RULES and then they run the ropes in complete Arena Mexico manner. Chi-Nen is that baldheaded guy from MP with the yellow tiny pants and red emblem on his penis area. He wrestles like a rookie and will take a beating. MEN'S beats him to death for a while. Yuasa looks like a good standard wrestler, sorta like Seikimoto- and they have a good stiff time in the ring together. Shiryu II kills Ito with the ever Boss NoHands Diving Senton Over The Toprope To The Floor. Sekimoto hits the SPEAR~! and Powerslam to set up the Spinning Elbow by MEN'S/ Sekimoto Lariat combo to get Sekimoto the pin. This was fun.

NANIWA/ Sasuke the Great/ Relay Shonen vs. Great Sasuke/ Tiger Mask IV/ Gran Hamada: Hamada looks fucking GREAT in this tournament. He always does one thing a year to keep you from writing him off. The Top O the Super J was last years thing and this is this year's thing. Relay Shonen has gone from non-entity to very competent wrestler- bringing the hate like a good heel will with his Stone Cold-esque kicks and punches. The Great Sasuke is the victim of the evil imposters and their astoundingly slutty valets early until he tags in TMIV who then takes an ass-beating betwixt assorted forays into submissions. Then Hamada and Sasuke get a hold of Relay and Hamada brings the I-Voted-For-Jimmy-Carter era ass-stomp to the whimsically be-gimmicked Relay Shonen. Hamada then leans into the crappy NANIWA offense before hitting the I-VOTED-FOR-BOB-DOLE era Spinning DDT. THEN it goes SUPERLUCHA as they keep breaking up each other highspots with other highspots- with TMIV being the one left with

Relay Shonen- who succumbs to a TMIV Cross Bodyblock. TMIV then hits the Tiger Suplex Hold for the win. Goddamn, you forget how good Sasuke, Hamada and TMIV are until you sit down and watch them. This was good.

Jado/ Gedo/ Masato Tanaka vs. Ryuji Ito/ Daisuke Sekimoto/ Men's Teioh: Gedo looks BUFF. Masato Tanaka looks like he's lost twenty pounds (of "wrestling polish" perhaps?) This match is balls to the wall. Jado- the secret worker of Japan- and Sekimoto have a power move exchange. Masato Tanaka beats the hell out of Ryuji Ito 3/4 legit then Gedo beats the hell out of him 4/4 legit. Man, Gedo looks better than he ever has and goes thoroughly US Pro Style Old School with the fistdrop and the Elbow Smash. The match itself goes US Pro Style Old School as Tanaka, Gedo and Jado cut off the ring and work over Ryuji Ito. MEN'S knows what to do as he gets cut off by the ref at key moments. Tanaka stays basic and the whole beatdown is kicks and punches and shoulderblocks. Ryuji hits the hot tag and MEN'S IS A HOUSE ON FIRE. This match fucking rules. Gedo, Jado and Tanaka are three evil Japanese Armstrongs and they make the faces' offense look stunning before applying their own level face-punching fun. The nearfalls are superhot- Sekimoto hits THE SPEAR and mediocre Toprope Lariat to allow Sekimoto to hit a BEAUTIFUL German on Tanaka; Jado kills Ito with a Superbomb that MEN'S breakups at two before the evil valet accidentally canes Jado to get the SCHOOLBOY!! for two like it's a Saturday afternoon in Memphis with Lance Russel being aghast. Ito gets the two count with the Rolling Elbow then Lariat Assisted Sunset Flip. Tanaka and Jado hit a 3-D and Jado procures the Crippler Crossface for the submission. FUN FUN FUN FUN FUN! Southern Tag Wrestling rules it in any language.

Takeshi Ono/ Masao Orihara/ KAW*KAW vs. Dick Togo/ Hideki Nishida/ Mr. Cacao: It gets all weird with the brackets here- as Togo's team wrestles again after Team Togo assaults the Moebius contingent. I could give a shit about the Sports Entertainment implications as long as I get to see Dick Togo wrestle- so whatever Orihara said while being beaten to death by our man Dick is a-okay by me. Mr Cacao replaces the former Super Cacao- NOZAWA- and the AWESOMENESS OF HIDEKI NISHIDA is about to come to fruition. The sky blue pants, the I AM MARTY JANNETTY tassles, the I AM KEVIN CRONIN OF REO SPEEDWAGON hair- Jesus christ, it all rules. He and COW*COW go at it on the floor, DADDY! Dick takes a giant piece out of Orihara's big fat ass, with Nishida making the assist like a Tokyo ROCK N ROLL RPM, motherfucka, with the Old School kneedrop to the forehead. Then Cacao headbutts him and sets him up for Dick MOTHERFUCKING TOGO to CRUSH him with the Eddy Guerrero Off the Apron Springboard Senton. Nishida goes Ricky Morton on Orihara's ass with the RnR Xpress flying dropkick with tassles flying akimbo. Orihara remains Dirtbag In Peril as Cacao hits Legdrop- as I am now figuring out that all those tapes of 1997-1999 WCWSN tapes finally hit the shores of Japan as this is SOOO Villano 4/ Steve Armstrong/ Tough Tom vs Villano 5/ Barry Houston/ Ciclope in thorough WCW SN full point grandness. Nishida is SOOOOO vaulting up the 500 with his fucking BALLZ OUT Forward Roll Dropkick into a Snap Suplex into a missed diving headbutt. Cacao and Takeshi Ono beat the fuck out of each other, as COW*COW apes a Dragon trainee du jour but hits a textbook indie Shoulder Separator Asai Moonsault 2001 and I weep loves easy tears at the beauty. Dick Togo beats the living piss out of Ono with a DDT and a Pedigree. Orihara hits Dick with a chair as he is ascending the ropes to set up the

BEAUTIFUL Orihara Moonsault to the floor. Cocoa does the Frog splash for two. Ono counters a Lariat with a kick to the stomach and punch RIGHT IN CACAO's MOTHERFUCKING FACE to set up the Octopus that is broken up by NISHIDA dropkicking Ono like a 1988 Jackie Fulton. Orihara kills Cocoa with a Michinoku Driver but rigor mortis kicks in at two. Orihara does his supernasty Spider Suplex Facebuster for the win. EVEN MORE FUN FUN FUN. Nishida is my new messiah. Jillion Jillion stars.

Jado/ Gedo/ Masato Tanaka vs. Great Sasuke/ Tiger Mask IV/Gran Hamada: This tape is like running into a friend you haven't seen in a few months. You get caught up have a few beer and you leave saying, "I should get up with him more often." Great Sasuke, TigerMask 4, Dick Togo and Masato Tanaka I need to get up with more often because I forget how much they rule sometimes. Man, Gedo looks great. He really does. He and Sasuke take it to the mat early and it's all about the Professional Wrestling as Gedo cheats like a motherfucker but Sasuke avoids an early HEAT SEGMENT to allow Masato Tanaka and Gran Hamada to take it to the mat, which is magical- as Hamada is wiley and Tanaka is strong and the use that as a basis. Then TM4 and Tanaka take it to the mat to set up Gedo and TM4 to go all Sayama Does Lucha Stylee- though it is so much more fun to watch TM4 go all stiff and hideous. Hamada and Tanaka start to brawling, Sasuke starts busting up on Tanaka until Tanaka reverses an armdrag into a chickenwing and makes Sasuke the recipient of the Heel Mauling- with the triple teams and the double chops and postings and the elbow smashes and the punches to the face that ruled it. Gedo does a PERFECT DiBiase fistedrop and I party and freak out at the MidSouth goodness of it all. Gedo is SOOOOO vaulting up the 500. They hit the Sidewalk Slam/Neckbreaker move, the Thunder Fire Powerbomb to remind you that Tanaka was in FMW forever, The WAR rollup to remind you that Gedo has been in WAR in one his cups o coffeee with every promotion on earth- all of it leading into the Superbomb which sets Deulling Stereo Superfly Splashes for TWO. Sasuke tries to run the ropes but Jado snares him into the Crippler Crossface and TM4 and Grampa Hamada are getting the business from Tanaka and Gedo UNTIL TM4 escapes to make the save. TM4 gets caned into a schoolboybut kicks to the hottag and then planchas the poop outta Jado, Sasuke Tope Con Hilo's Tanaka all to hell, Hamada Toprope Neckbreaks Gedo and it all breaks down outside as the Hot Valet tries to revive Gedo in the ring. Gedo starts beating the crap out of Hamada and the ref tries to stop him. Gedo punches the ref and the ref calls for the bell. Not a good ending even if it was an ode to 80s All Japan ending. Not that I don't want a rematch or anything.

Chapparita ASARI/Hiromi Yagi vs. Mima Shimoda/Etsuko Mita: This was clipped alllll to hell, which sucks because Yagi never gets out of the house anymore and the more Yagi you can see, the better off you are. The big downside is that Chaparrita ASARI does one of her signature Astoundingly Sloppy Highspots and botches a missile dropkick and looks like she almost knocks Yagi's anterior crucient ligament into the third row. Yagi rocks in the sparse footage shown, going at it with the alluring Mita submission for submission. Shimoda kicks the ref in the face but isn't DQed for some reason- as Mita hits the Death Valley Bomb ending the match. They didn't show any footage of Shimoda or ASARI in the ring properly wrestling. Did I tell you that I hate Samurai TV.

Takeshi Ono/ Masao Orihara/KAW*KAW vs. Great Sasuke/Tiger Mask IV/ Gran Hamada (Tournament Final): They got the Samurai TV typing pool to come out and hold the THOROUGHLY boss Apex Of Triangle titles. Maybe after spring for the belts, Orihara isn't paying anyone any chicken sammiches after all. KAW*KAW is listed as COW*COW on the TV screen so i'm going with that- because it's funnier! AHAHAHAHAHAHAHAHAHA! This is all about a brawl at the start, as Orihara bludgeons Sasuke with lowblows and chairshots early on. Ono and Orihara do the nine part doubleteam Drop Toehold/ Legdrop/ Kick to the Face/ Camel Clutch/ Dropkick to the face/ Chinlock/ Another Kick to the Face. It was FUN! and led into the rest of the beatdown that Sasuke suffered. COW*COW then pummels TM4 and you get a good look at the quality craftsmanship of his TRULY rad mask. Silver eyes, Silver streaks to the back, all against a black background- A TRUE TRIUMPH in understated elegance. COW*COW- The Mask will be sported by SOMEONE at next years Super 8- it is prophesized by me. Anyhoo, he works on the knee for a while until TM4 gets Orihara in the ring and TM4 kicks his way to the tag of hotness. Sasuke and Orihara have a very ugly section of wrestling to set up Hamada coming in to settle Orihara down. TM4 kinda does some half-assed submissions and the match kinda grinds to a halt in that Orihara The Inconsistent Worker kinda way. Sasuke does a few submissions but the heat ain't generating in my heart of hearts. It doesn't really pick up until Takeshi Ono and Gran Hamada have this really cool match-saving exchange- where Hamada and Ono start beating each other to death. Hamada sells Ono's dropkick to the knee like Ono had hit him with a truck- doing a great looking Tony Nathan Style sideways mid-air spin- making the second dropkick on the knee through the ropes even more fun. The heat is full throttle as Orihara throws Sasuke off the apron and hits a picture perfect Asai Moonsault which goes directly into COW*COW beheading TM4 in mid "running to a tope" attempt- with the cool-ass Misawa 2 78/97ths kick out. TM4 hits the Tiger Driver into a Sleeper as Orihara is bludgeoning Sasuke outside the ring, though Orihara makes the save. Hamada stops Orihara from hitting his Spider Suplex thingy on TM4, allowing TM4 for to hit a missile dropkick and leave the ring via Piscado. Sasuke hits a Black Tiger Bomb and then does this weird ass dive off the topturnbuckle headfirst onto Takeshi Ono- who is prone on the apron, and it had the look of the good old days when Sasuke would fracture his skull doing something stupid. Hamada finally kills off Orihara with a Toprope Stone Cold Stunner and the return of the beatdown by Gedo, Jado and Tanaka on Hamada, Sasuke, and Tanaka kicks in.

This was a bunch of fun- if not state of the art wrestling 24-7. The booking was pretty goofy, but the wrestling made up for it most of the time. I wish there was more of Togo. The MEN'S Club matches add to the quality of the inspired Gedo/Jado/Tanaka team and the Michinoku Pro teams to make this more than swell enough to recommend.

NAIMARK EXAMINES KEN SHAMROCK
(by Mike Naimark)

This issue's theme isn't one that lends itself well to the intense world of MMA competition. Without pre-determined results contingent on the good will of a booker, the ambitious MMA

competitor has little incentive to offer a willing orifice to a promoter in hopes of getting a push in any but the most literal sense.

And yet, the world of MMA is a business, and just like any business, the ladder to advancement is rife with clandestine opportunities to skip a rung or two at the expense of your less-cutthroat colleagues. And I can't think of anybody in the world of MMA who has a greater perception of achievement with less actual, uh, ACHEIVEMENT, then the subject of today's review. Ladies and gentlemen, allow me to present to you a man whose gaudy career turns utterly pedestrian under the harsh lights of scrutiny, and man who was given favorable treatment from promoters for reasons other than what he had accomplished once the bell rang. Weighing in at 230lbs of solid muscle wrapped around a creamy center of bullshit, the Buff Bagwell of MMA, KEN SHAMROCK!

Ken Shamrock actually started out in the world of professional wrestling before becoming a star in the Japanese Pancrase MMA promotion in 1993. Pancrase is a more grappling-oriented style of fighting which places numerous restrictions of striking, resulting in many fights resembling a girly slap-attack until both men tumble to the ground and each grab a leg, rolling like they were aflame in a desperate attempt to sink in an ankle pick or kneebar. Yep, that's Pancrase in a nutshell for ya. As forgettable as his pro-graps career was in these early days, Shamrock soon became a major celebrity in Japan for his fighting prowess and brawny gaijin looks. Entering the first UFC in November of '93, Shamrock was considered a favorite by many observers because of his success in Japan, not to mention that intangible factor – he LOOKED like a fighter, with bulging muscles and a gnarled nose, while much of the rest of the field looked like taxi drivers, plumbers, and Arena Football dropouts. One fighter decided to wear a single boxing glove for his match, and only looked like an idiot. Let's take a look at Ken Shamrock's dynamic debut in the UFC, and the glory that followed:

1st Match – Ken Shamrock vs. Pat Smith: Shamrock totally outclasses the befuddled Smith, tapping him out with an ankle pick in about a minute and a half. Pat Smith would go on to fight in Japan and Brazil in addition to another couple of tours with the UFC, and his current career record stands at 8 wins, 8 losses.

2nd Match – Ken Shamrock vs. Royce Gracie – Royce was probably the least-intimidating looking fighter in the field that night, a svelte 170lbs of swarthy Brazilian manhood looking like he'd be more at home teaching tango lessons than trying to make grown men scream in pain. It takes Royce a mere 57 seconds to make Shamrock tap-out to a choke. Shamrock begins his long tradition of making excuses after his poor showings, explaining, "I'm not used to this kind of stuff", presumably meaning real fights. Royce's career record currently stands at 12-2-1.

Having underwhelmed the martial arts world with his unimpressive showing, Shamrock returned to the 'kind of stuff' he presumably DID know, Pancrase in Japan, and racked up a mediocre 5-3 record in Pancrase before returning for UFC3. Was Ken ready to dominate?

1st Match – Ken Shamrock vs. Christophe Lenninger – Lenninger's background is in judo, and he wears a fabulous blue gi which matches his dreamy eyes. One problem many traditional judokas had in MMA was that their tournament experience tended to make them rely on throws which were more effective against clothed opponents. Against Shamrock's slippery carcass, Lenninger can't initiate any offense and takes a beating before taping out. Lenninger's career MMA record stands at 0-4.

2nd Match – Ken Shamrock vs. Felix Lee Mitchell – I remember someone commenting that Felix Lee Mitchell sounded like the name of a hired killer. Mitchell was a prison guard from Memphis, a city noted for having among the most violent prisons in the country. But without his nightstick, Mitchell is overwhelmed by Shamrock and taps out to a choke in short order. Mitchell fights once more and loses again before returning to ELV-OZ and his side job dealing tits. 0-2, skidoo.

So Shamrock should have been headed to the finals after winning against two fighters who had never won a fight in their entire careers, but no, Shamrock displays another of his questionable qualities – in the span of these two short, one-sided fights, he appears to have hurt his hand, and withdraws. Royce Gracie, in the other bracket, also withdraws after his thrilling fight against Kimo, and we end up with the worst finals in the history of the UFC, Harold Howard v Steve Jennum.

So it's back to Pancrase for The Sham, and a string of victories before returning at UFC5 for a 'Superfight' against Royce Gracie. Gracie, of course, was an undefeated 3-time UFC champion and considered to be a legend. Shamrock, uh, well, he looked good in a Speedo and was tapped out by Royce in under a minute. Former UFC executive Bob Meyerowitz later confessed to having placed Shamrock in such a prestigious position within the promotion based largely on his 'look', and Shamrock didn't disappoint in that department, subsisting on steamed fish, tweezing his eyebrows to arched perfection, and doing thousands of crunches in preparation for his.....

SUPERFIGHT – Ken Shamrock vs. Royce Gracie – In an embarrassing show of timidity, Shamrock spent the entire fight in Royce Gracie's guard, offering no real offense and essentially maintaining position without ever attempting any techniques which might lead to victory (or, more likely, to defeat). The match goes the time-limit; Shamrock lands a single punch in the overtime before the fight ends and is ruled a draw. Outweighing his opponent by nearly 50lbs, one might think Shamrock would show some deference and humility to the undefeated Brazilian jiu-jitsu wizard who had won 3 UFC titles since he tapped Shamrock out in their last fight. But no, that just wouldn't be Shammy's style, would it?

"I wanted Royce Gracie to try everything he knew to try and beat me, and he tried different leg chokes and different armbars, but I had worked on this. And it was a test for Royce Gracie to try and beat Ken Shamrock and I'm gonna put him through a beatin'. His monkey ass has never seen anything like this, a beatin' like this."

And here we see another facet to Shamrock's disingenuous pattern of self-promotion paired with self-deception – by not losing to Royce Gracie in quick and decisive fashion this time, Shamrock essentially claims victory. By refusing to initiate any offense from the guard, he can claim to have instead deftly foiled Royce's offense from the guard!

Shamrock sinks even deeper into his pit of classlessness:

"I stuck him with the right hand. And as you see when he hits the ground, he's done. Right at that point and time, Royce Gracie's life will never be the same. That punch has destroyed Royce Gracie's warrior mentality. Look at his eyes, Royce Gracie is done. Royce Gracie will never be the warrior that he used to be. Royce Gracie will never, ever be the same because of that punch"

Some years later, Royce Gracie will have a fight in Japan against Kazushi Sakuraba which will raise the bar for MMA endurance and technique to levels previous thought unreachable. Ken Shamrock competes on that same card, which I will discuss below.

And Ken's empty self-promotion pays off for him in the UFC. With the UFC promoters adding judges and time limits to their fights, Royce bows out, still undefeated and in possession of three tournament victories. By virtue of only losing to Royce Gracie once in two fights, Ken Shamrock and his chiseled abs are promoted to Superfight status for UFC6, despite having never even fought in a UFC finals, much less won a tournament. His opponent will be Dan Severn, who lost to Royce in UFC4 before winning the tournament at UFC5.

Ken Shamrock vs. Dan Severn – Shamrock's finest moment in the UFC, as he catches Severn on a shoot and chokes him out with the guillotine. Severn's career record is an impressive 27-5-3, and I note this for one reason only: this is the ONLY win Ken Shamrock ever records over an opponent with a winning record outside of Pancrase. Shamrock shows his traditional level of class when interviewed on the fight:

"So he won a few tournaments. Big Deal. I'm the submission specialist, I'm the striker, I have all the arsenal."

For UFC7, Shamrock is again matched up with a more accomplished UFC tournament winner, this time Oleg Taktarov, the Russian sambo master who took the UFC6 championship with a choke-out of Tank Abbott.

Ken Shamrock vs. Oleg Taktarov – In another listless display of non-technique, Shamrock again sits in the guard for the entire fight and offers no sort of offense, which might lead to either a win or a defensive counter-attack. The fight goes the time-limit and is ruled a draw. Oleg's career record stood at 8-5-2 when he retired last year.

Shamrock was invited to the Ultimate Ultimate 1995, the UFC's tournament of champions, but was injured and unable to compete. At UFC8, he was again asked to defend the title he had

never won, that of 'Superfight' champion, against the winless Kimo Leopoldo, best known for his thrilling loss to Royce Gracie in UFC3.

Ken Shamrock vs. Kimo – Joe Son was noticeable by his absence, and my disappointment was equally noticeable. Shamrock eats a right hand from Kimo, which nearly swells his eye shut before sinking a kneebar and forcing the big Hawaiian to tap-out. Shamrock quickly seizes on his win over Kimo to 'prove' his superiority to Royce Gracie again: "Kimo basically beat the monkey crap out of him. Royce Gracie was lucky that Kimo had a ponytail..." Kimo's career record stands at 3-3-1, but is notable for being the only man with wins over both Bam Bam Bigelow AND Paul Varelans.

At UFC9, Shamrock had a rematch with Dan Severn, and the two of them engaged in what I consider to be the unquestionably WORST fight EVER, a plodding affair where both men circled, hands held high, for 20 minutes. Although neither man deserved to win, Severn took the decision, an appropriate end of Shamrock's 'Superfight' status, which he himself had never won in the first place.

Shamrock managed to stay healthy long enough to arrive at Ultimate Ultimate '96 and score a quick win over Brian Johnson (record 4-5) before withdrawing once again with a hand injury. At some point in the evening, Shamrock has an encounter with Tank Abbott, and Shamrock makes a public challenge to Tank on the air. Shamrock then quickly signs a contract with the World Wrestling Federation, and the fight never happens. The UFC puts together a Ken Shamrock tribute PPV in honor of his zero UFC tournament wins, but refuses to pay for UFC7 champ Marco Ruas to bring his wife and two trainers to America for a fight.

After a year of pro-graps and being booked towards a stupefying incest angle compliments of Vince Russo, Shamrock leaves pro-wrestling for the PRIDE promotion in Japan. On the same fight card where Royce Gracie, drained of warrior spirit by Shamrock's mighty right hand, goes a full 90 minutes against Kazushi Sakuraba in an already legendary encounter, Ken Shamrock defeats BattleArts wrestler Alexander Otsuka (career record 2-7) by TKO.

Shamrock returned at PRIDE10 and faces Kazuyuki Fujita, a powerful freestyle wrestler who held a win over Mark Kerr. In what I consider to be a supreme irony, Ken Shamrock, the man who won more by doing less than anybody in MMA, throws everything he has against the rock-hard noggin of Fujita – techniques Shamrock had never displayed outside of the protected confines of Pancrase. Powerful punches, quick snapping combinations, even a few high kicks! But Fujita absorbs everything Shamrock threw at him and kept moving forward. Shamrock eventually turns to his corner and begs them to throw in the towel at about 7 minutes into the fight, and they do so. Shamrock, his face drained of color, would briefly lose consciousness in the locker room before returning to his hotel.

So here are a few points I want to make about Ken Shamrock:

Shamrock's non-Pancrase MMA record is a solid 7-2-3 (counting the UFC9 debacle with Severn as a draw, which I always do). But this record is highly deceptive. Against opponents with winning records, Shamrock manages a lousy 1-2-3. Against all others, Shamrock fattens his record at the expense of what boxing old-timers referred to lovingly as 'tomato cans': 6-0 against opponents with a combined career record of 17-34-4. Shamrock entered three UFC tournaments and didn't win a single one, but was rewarded with 'Superfight' status and his own PPV.

Now of course, maybe I'm just picking on 'The Sham' because of my generally misanthropic nature; let's see what his fellow fighters have to say:

ROYCE GRACIE: (On his UFC5 Superfight with Shamrock) "No he was just holding onto it, he came in for a draw. HE KNOWS HE CANNOT BEAT ME. He came in for a draw. He knew he just didn't want to lose, that's why he requested the time limit. He knew he just wanted to have a draw, for him that's a victory."

(On Shamrock & Kimo's physiques): "It's not steroids, it's called performance enhancers (laughing). They just drink milk-they're big boys!"

DON FRYE (UFC8 & UUFC'96 champ): "Then at the UFC in Iowa [Shamrock] and Mikey Burnett got up there and started talking a bunch of trash about Dan Gable. You know, neither one of those guys was a collegiate wrestler and they have no right to say some of those things about Dan Gable. I don't know if they're pulling some WWF angle and just wanted to stir up some heat. That was just unprofessional and asinine of those guys."

"I think [Shamrock] is full of shit and he has been lying to the fans for four years. Hell, he can't even finish a tournament"

TANK ABBOTT: "He's aptly named, SHAMrock. He's a fake, he's a fraud, he's a sham...Well let's put it this way, he had two opportunities to fight me and he pulled out both times, so you go figure out what's going on. I never pull out of a fight. "

DAN SEVERN (UFC5 & UUFC'95 champ): "Do I care for his attitude? No. One of us has accomplished it on his own ability. The other has not."

And there you have it! Ken Shamrock's legacy in the fight world is one of half-truths and excuses being overlooked by promotional entities enamored of his physique and self-promotion. While he may not have ever had another man's genitals in his mouth (not that there's anything wrong with that – sometimes you just need a ride home), Ken Shamrock nonetheless has had a career that would do any of Bert Prentice's buttery love-muffins proud! Ken Shamrock, we salute you with the First Annual DVDVR 'Balls Across the Nose' Award for MMA Fraudulence! I'm sure you couldn't be more proud.

%%%%\$%%\$% Universal Pro Wrestling "Control" (6/26/01)
(by Phil Rippa)

I started watching this show first, then I realized that I was watching the wrong show. So, I stopped and watched all of the May show. Then I finished watching this one. So if some things are repeated it is because I didn't catch them when I edited this. I am a lazy bastard. I hang my head in shame. All these UPW shows can be found here

The Urban Outlaws (Mike & Marshall Knox) vs. Native Blood (Navajo Warrior/Ghost Walker) Schneider was all bummed that I didn't get to see Navajo Warrior on the first show so now I get my chance to see if Phil #1 was drinking before noon again. See this is Cowboys vs. Indians. Get It! Ha Ha! Marshall Knox now has these pants that say "Professional Wrestling" or "Rob Black Production" – too bad he doesn't work XPW because then it would be both. Native Blood has the standard American Indian Offense (chops, chops, scoop slam, chops, war dance, chops) but I kind dig them as Ghost Walker takes a beating and Navajo Warrior has that nice looking elbow drop. Sometimes simple wrestling is the best wrestling and that rings true for most of this match. What we have here is basic solid tag team wrestling. They are some questionable moments - the most prominent is when Ghost Walker goes for a Corkscrew Senton and looks completely lost doing it. The Knox boys are really becoming my new guilty pleasure as Mike Knox does what can only be described as a Reverse Fisherman Suplex that was all sorts of great. Once Marshall loses the Swanton Bomb (because that move is quickly becoming the new headlock) they will be my new favorite Indy team. (Unless, of course, Death & Destruction tapes start pouring back through my door).

There is an interview here with Mike Modest and Donovan Morgan but it was shot by the same folks who brought you the Blair Witch Project, so who knows what actually took place. Something about killing the Ballards later on.

"Scrap Iron" Adam Pearce vs. Al Katrazz

Chance #3 for Pearce to show me that he has improved. Hardkore Kid and El Jefe are with Pearce so that assures us that lots of nonsense will ensue. Supposedly Hardkore Kid just had back surgery last month – things to keep in mind for the 500. Pearce gets whooped on and it takes the interference of Jefe and Kid to swing the mo' in this brawl. Since Pearce gets little offense, it is hard to judge that side of his game but he sells okay and is willing to bump. Al Katrazz is right there in the middle of all big man. Lots of overbooking, and blown overbooking at that, as Hardkore Kid misses his cue to break up a pinfall and then when Al Katrazz has powder thrown in his eyes, the ref turns around and walks right into the powder, yet doesn't call for the DQ. Simple wrestling is the best wrestling.

Okay, I am just going to completely skip this interview segments because the voice on this girl in the nurse's outfit is making blood spurt out of my ears.

They wheel out a former American Gladiator (Malibu if you must know) to be another color commentator. I long for the days of wrestling.

The Lost Boys (Ryan Ruffio (sp??)/Scott Lost) vs. The Manilla Thrillaz ("Funky" Billy Kim/ "Blazin" Beni Chong aka B-Boy)

This is the Lost Boys Internet debut. So B-Boy is now Blazin Beni Chong???? So instead of his team, UPW is now changing his name back and forth. Damn you, UPW!!!! DAMN YOU TO HELL!!!!!!!!!! Despite the dispute over naming rights, I really like the Manilla Thrillaz as they deliver the kicks and even more kicks. Plus, they continue the influx of Chinese professional wrestlers. The Artist Sorta Known As B-Boy really brings the goods, including this overhead Uranage that had me all misty for Julio Dinero's Rock Bottom '99. The Lost Boys are 14-year old Billy Kidman clones. One of them does too many variations of the Diamond Cutter for my tastes – I counted three, including their finisher, which is a Hart Attack/3D hybrid. Of course, the Manilla Thrillaz win with ANOTHER version of the 3D (JESUS! There are a thousand wrestling moves out there, steal something else.)

Big Schwag wanders out and in his oratory, explains why this little event is called Control. Schwag owns 40% of the company. Rick Bassman owns 40%. Someone else owns 20%. Who is???? Who gives a rat's ass.

Mike Modest/Donovan Morgan (APW) vs. Ballard Brothers (UPW)

This should be fun and anytime you are going to build towards a Russian Leg Sweep, you have a perfectly good match in my book. I just noticed that one of the Ballards (Shannon, I think? Aww crap, let me check my last review. Yup, Shannon) has a knee brace on. Never noticed that before. Is that new? The good news is that it doesn't seem like he is working hurt because all four men are really on. God, the bald Mike Modest is a creepy, creepy sight. Hey Front Chancery! Okay, this is the greatest match ever. (Yikes, my computer has kinda crapped out of me here. I will have to go back and watch this again.) This contains a whole lotta wrestling in that you long to see. The Ballards do a lot of moves that you know evolved from watching lots of Midnight Express tapes. And there is absolutely zilch wrong with that. Wow, Modest top-rope foot stomp. This is the greatest match of all-time. All they need is a body vice and a five-arm. There is this spiffy forearm sequence with Modest playing Kawada, complete with the "That didn't hurt me. That didn't hurt me. Oh yes, it did" sell. AWESOME! Morgan rolls through a backslide to get the win with a double underhook piledriver thingy. THAT I have never seen before. This might have been the best UPW match that I have seen. So far, all the matches have been entertaining and on the good-to-great level. Plus, they are all getting time to actually build to something. Mmmm... Internet wrestling.

Cheerleader Melissa/Looney Lane vs. G.A.Y. (Preston Scott/Ultra Hot)

So much for that streak. Moving right along. Or trying to. Stupid Real Media Player. Well at least this match is appropriate with the issue's theme. You know, there is more wrestling in this thing than there has any right to be. Hey cool, Tilt-a-Whirl Shoulder Breaker. God Dammit! I am going to have to watch this, aren't I. Nope, here comes the comedy again. I guess if this was before the Joshi 100 came out, I would have watched but it's not. Too bad. So Sad. (Author's Note: Upon further review, this match was nowhere near as vomit inducing as it could have been. Gorgeous and Young have this PG-13 feel to them (besides kinda looking like Wolfie D and J.C.

Ice – or whatever the hell their names are now). You could probably plop them down in Memphis and they would get along fine. They have the selling and the working of the crowd part down. Just get someone to teach them to punch and you have GOLD DADDY!!! The women appear to be actually trained in wrestling (possible WOW Restart members?). If they had eliminated the goofy bits ripped straight from the booking sheets of a 1980s midget match, this would have been one of the best intergender matches ever.)

“Shooter” Tony Jones (APW) vs. “Big Time” Tom Howard (UPW) – SoCal Championship
This is actually Tony Jones versus a mystery opponent. The opponent is announced as Horseshu but he has a bum shoulder due to his confrontation with Hoshikawa (see above) so he announces that Tom Howard will be challenging Jones. (Actually, they do this really cool thing of teasing Shinya Hashimoto being the opponent. If I was there live, I would have lost my shit.) This is fought under “Shoot Fight Rules” – whatever that might mean in UPW. I need to go back and watch all those matches when Howard was Russian because I don’t remember him being this enjoyable. Jones is the guy who you always watch his matches and go “You should be so much better than this. Why aren’t you? BE GOOD!” My big problem with Jones at the moment is that his whole gimmick is that he is the “shooter” yet someone like Howard throws more credible looking strikes. This is like watching a BattlARTS rookies match as they work the style but the affair is nowhere near as crisp as you would get from Ishikawa, Malenko, etc. Now, that is not to say that this isn’t good because it is (Crimney, that is an awkward sentence.) The ending comes out of nowhere as Howard hits a Blockbuster to take the title. It is the things like that that bother me. What is the point of “Shoot Fight” rules if the match can end via pinfall OFF A BLOCKBUSTER??? “Yeah, I can remember when Oleg Taktarov won UFC VI with a Diamond Cutter. He had tried the worm but Abbott was prepared for it and got out of the way.”

Smelly/Keiji Sakoda vs. Ultimate Army (Nathan Jones/John Heidenreich)

This might be fun or this might be a festering pile of shit. I haven’t been impressed by Smelly and Jones and Heidenreich aren’t especially good (they just have their moments). Okay, it is going to be the latter as Jones and Big John just squash the members of Schwag’s Army, who really only get some token offense in but they get the fluke win. I got a whole lot more should be better wrestling ahead of me so I will just move along.

Damien Steele/Mikey Henderson/Samoa Joe vs. Chavo Guerrero, Jr./Chavo Guerrero, Sr./Mando Guerrero

AH YEAH! This is what we all wanted to see. (This was actually supposed to be Chuck Palumbo and Sean O’Haire instead of Chavo, Sr. and Mando - Thank God for small miracles). Come on, Chavo, Sr. and Mando are what like 400 years old and they can still go. (I would have liked to see Hector in this puppy too). Of course, once everyone gets past the Pepe jokes and get onto the wrestling. Chavo, Jr. was starting to get back to actual wrestling during the last days of Turner and now he gets to get all the way back to form while working these Indy dates. Steele needs to go back to wearing the fanny pack and cutting promos because he ain’t bringing the goodness. To be fair, that is probably due to the fact that this is Steele’s first match back from injury. Or, it could just be that Steele ain’t that good. (Phil awaits the outrage from Damien Steele fanboys. And from confused Damien Kane fans.) Chavo, Sr. gets worked over for a good

part of the match, which surprises me because I thought Junior would be working the whole match. What am I talking about? This is the Guerreros. They will all be wrestling 40 years after their deaths. And Mando isn't afraid to work stiff in this match. HEY NOW! They do the star and FUCK! Triple tope. What the hell were Senior and Mando thinking about? Another poor ending as Steele punks out the ref to get his team disqualified – that after a really bad Brainbuster from Chavo. Still, I love some old lucha.

They show a bunch of different stuff up on the video screen but trying to watch the video screen in person is hard enough. Try deciphering it while watching it through Streaming Video. It stinks that I can't make it out because they show highlights of the Zero One PPV, the Chris Daniels documentary and the UPW TV pilot. Daniels comes out and thanks the fans.

28 man Battle Royal

This is another thank you to the fans for their support. Some thank you. Do you really expect me to sit through a Battle Royal that is just a front to set up another round of the Ultimate Army vs. Smelly/Sakoda – a match I didn't watch the first time? This was better than the ECWA summit.

Los Cubanitos (Ricky Reyes/Rocky Romero) vs. Evolution (Nova/Frankie Kazarian) – UPW Tag Team Titles

I am still trying to figure out how it is possible that Los Cubanitos lost to the Urban Outlaws on the last card and yet they get the title shot whilst the Outlaws are jerking the curtain. What does everyone have against Cowboys? I am also trying to figure out where the “New” went from Evolution's name. The pants that Nova and Kazarian wear really scream out that they are spit brothers (and I mean spit brothers in a different way than you think. Well maybe not you sick fucks.). Either I am misjudging the size of Evolution or Reyes and Romero are really tiny. Of course, they still can wrestle but I am sure that at some point Jim Ross' will be telling them to “work on their upper body”. Kazarian becomes the first person I have ever seen blow the skin the cat spot. Ya know, Kazarian hasn't blown me away yet. I know some people pimp him really hard but I think there are plenty of better young US Indy workers floating around than him. There is one spot in this match that is really great. Nova blocks a victory roll by Romero but as he still has Romero up on his shoulders, Reyes dropkicks Nova's knee out which in turn leads to Romero doing a facebuster. This was much better than some of the other Evolution tags that I have seen. This had your traditional tag team build, with Evolution getting the early momentum, Los Cubanitos working over the middle part of the match – complete with a couple of false tags. And then a solid finish that had no Sports Entertainment elements (Well, I am ignoring the fact that Nova did kick out of what essentially amounted to two finishers). However, it DID have Evolution winning with the Double Moonsault/Rock Bottom aka the Spanish Fly that the Maximo Brothers use. Funny, that's the first time Evolution has ever used that. Hmmm..... I wonder if Nova thinks that is an InNOVAtive move? Well of course it has to be. Nova never steals anyone else's moves. Maybe, all these UPW have taken place well in the past and it just takes several years for the satellite feeds to reach Earth. Yeah, that's the ticket. Parallel Universe. Totally Carl Sagan.

Everyone should be unemployed or have slacker jobs so they can sit around watching wrestling on the internet. Next, I am going to see what these AWA feeds look like.

~!~

^^*^*^*^* The Best of the Spanish Announce Team
(by Rev. Ray)

At the final Elk's Lodge show in Queens, I picked up this gem which is an early comp of the Mikey Whipwreck trainees, Red, Joe and Jose Maximo, the Spanish Announce Team. I'm amazingly disappointed who put this tape out (it didn't say it on the label), but I'll get to make fun of him later.

Red vs. (Chris) Devine w/ Miss Kara (UCW - Jan, 2001)

This is the first round of the UCW North Eastern Championship. Red makes his way to the ring and you can see people in the front row laughing at his size as for those of you who haven't seen Red, he looks like he's 14 years old and he wrestles like he doesn't want to see 15. Of course, at this point, nobody has seen him before. Red's taking on Devine, who I believe is another Mikey trainee. They take it to the mat early and look competent as the fans chant "Where's

your Mommy" at Red. Of course, it doesn't take Red very long to win the fans over as he shows off some good agility flipping out of some stuff and ranaing out of a powerbomb attempt sending Devine outside so he can hit a huge dive. They go back and forth with a lot of stuff, Devine hits a great full nelson slam into a DDT move. Devine goes for a top rope move, but Red counters it and hits a top rope rana, Kara interferes to save Devine from being pinned. He tried to low blow Red as Devine holds him, but Red jumps and Devine gets nuttet. Red goes after Kara, Devine goes to super kick him but hits Kara by mistake, Red hits an enzugiri and a huge pheonix splash for the win. This was a good match. The puches were a little weak, but the wrestling was good.

Joe L Maximo vs. Prince Nana (UCW - Jan, 2001)

Another match from the first round, Nana does a royal gimmick from Gahna. This is a pretty quick and basic match until Maximo hits a crown's gate to set up a moonsault for the win.

Joe L Maximo vs. Red (UCW - Jan,2001)

This is a semi-finals of the tournament. The crowd is totally different for the second of Red matches as having seen him once, they're now all pulling for him. Joe starts out by shoving Red down a few times, before Red leg dives him. They do a bunch of counters to each others moves with flip outs before Joe goes for a tilt-a-whirl move that gets turned into a DDT by Red who then hits his unique standing shooting star press for a two count. Maximo rolls out to the floor and Red gets in a fakey into a big tope con hilo onto Maximo on the floor. They come back in, Red tries for a top rope moonsault press but Joe hits him with a drop kick and a brainbuster. Maximo presses and dumps Red to the floor. Joe hits an insane crucifix powerbomb into a DDT for a two that ref might have accidentally counted a 3. The UCW referee is a sight to behold. He looks like he's wearing a barrel underneath his

outfit and as you can imagine is not exactly mobile. They go out to the floor. Red hits a plancha from the top and then hits a really insane dive similar to Kaz Hayashi's plancha de agilia, except he's back flipping over the ropes rather than after he's cleared the ropes. Maximo fights off a rana attempt, but Red hits him with a spin kick as he dives off. Red hits a shooting star press from the top but Sledge, who's also in the tournament runs in. Red eats a yakuza kick from Sledge and Maximo hits an underhook face first powerbomb that's set up like Tomoko Watanabe's Hell Smasher.

Joe L Maximo vs. Sledge (UCW - Jan,2001)

This is the tournament finals. Maximo throws out to the floor and takes a bit long before hitting a big dive. Sledge goes after Maximo's injured Arm. The referee takes a bump and Sledge goes for a chair, threatening to Pillmanize the arm when Red runs in and takes out Sledge and his allies. Maximo hits the moonsault for the win. Short match, but this was the guys 3rd matches of the night. The announcing team for this show was not spectacular and spent the 3rd match busting on Sledge and doing inside jokes about people milling around the announcers area. Maximo wins the UCW North Eastern Title.

Red/Joe L Maximo vs. The Briscoe Brothers w/ Dewey Donovan (CZW)

The continuing string of bad indy announcers continues as the CZW announcers seem to enjoy yelling really loud into the microphones. They do a bunch of jokes about the Brisco's similar name. The fact that the one announcer complains about them using a face lock, the other says "it's wrestling" and the other says "THIS IS CZW" gives you an idea of how brilliant this announcing is. The Briscos control in the early part, hitting a double rock bottom move, a double drop kick and one hits a nice dive over the top. One Briscoe gets caught with a super kick as he does a springboard by Maximo.

The Mikey trainees hit a standing shooting star and a leg drop combo and a back suplex/springboard leg drop combo. Maximo hits some nice lariats in this. A double team gets foiled and the one Briscoe hits a top rope Rana. The SAT punish the one brother as the announcers punish me. Maximo nails a crown's gate to set up Red doing a double springboard Phoenix splash. Dewey interferes allowing the briscos to tag. The fresh Briscoe hits some nice drop kicks and a flying heel kick. They blow a Total Elimination attempt, but they hit a tiger driver on Red followed by a moonsault to get the win over the SAT. Have I mentioned the CZW announcers suck?

The Spanish Announce Team (Joe/Jose Maximo) vs. Devine Storm (Chris Devine/Quiet Storm) (HWA?)

The SAT are working heels here as they come out and explain their gimmick which is they are upset that all the wrestlers come out and destroy the spanish announcers table. This is another battle of Whipwreck trainees. Jose starts out with Storm. They do a bunch of counters and reversel spots out of a greco roman knuckle lock, followed by a bunch of counters and back and forth of the same moves on one another. Storm busts out some nice suplexes in the course of the match. The pace keeps up on the match and they do a lot of nice back and forth action. Joe busts out his evil Crown's Gate off the ropes and his underhook face first powerbomb with Storm making the

save for Devine. It looked like Jose and Devine mess up a leap frog spot when Jose lands on Devine, but they save it well by turning it over into a cradle move. They do a real crazy spot where Jose lifts Storm over him and Storm lands on and rans Joe off to the floor before Jose and Devine get in and the hot firey death dives. SAT hit stereo brainbusters and go for moonsaults on both men. Both team do mirror moves of their partners, as the match goes on the fans seem to turn on the match, I'm not sure why though because the action is good and all the guys are busting their asses and not really blowing anything. Devine Storm do a spot where Storm sets up a powerbomb, Devine hits a far away Tope Rope drop kick to force the powerbomb onto Joel. The finish comes where Joe is setting up a superplex, but Storm grabs him and we get the weirdo Powerbomb version of the stackerplex that Yamakawa and Honma used to do with Joe superplexing Devine. When they land, Jose frog splashes Devine and the ref counts a double pin. Good match, but the finish was kinda eh and the crowd sucked. I was spared "great" indy announcing.

Spanish Announce Team (Joe/Jose) w/ Red vs. The Back Seat Boys (Trent Acid/Johnny Kashmire) w/ Donnie B (PWF)

Donnie B cuts an indy promo that can't be understood over the sound system (those making it an office Indy Promo). This is being held in a ballroom so there's a bunch of chaneliers and lights made to look like candles. It's like someone hired PWF to work their prom. Johnny works against Jose at the start and hits a nice arm hook/t-bone suplex type move early on. Trent has a good segment with Joe before sending him out after a blue thunder attempt. Everyone's out on the floor, Acid does a big run up the ropes dive that takes everyone else with Trent landing right on his face on the floor. We get the big trainwreck spot of everyone hitting dives which ends when Refree Mike Keiner gets into the act and hits a dive. They fight down to the stage, Trent teases a dive off the apron, but Red cuts him off with a lariat and ends up hitting a shooting star press onto Kashmeier off the stage. Acid then gets run through the wringer as the SAT hit 3 stretch combos as they do a la tapatia with a dragon suplex, followed by a sitting surfboard with a drop kick into a Cavernaro with a springboard knee drop. Acid recovers with some super kicks but when he goes up top, Red crotches him on the ropes, setting up the Spanish Fly. Kashmere makes the save, eventually, the Back Seats fight off the 3 members and hit their Back Seat Driver, sort of a face first Iconoclasm by Acid caught by a diamond cutter by Johnny for the win. Good match.

Abunai vs. Red (UCW)

Abunai does a japanese gimmick and wears a mask with a ponytail on it. Amazingly, he is as short, if not shorter than Red, but is a bit thicker. Abunai shows a lot of promise as well though he does blow a couple of things in the course of the match. They do a neat spot where Abunai hits a tornado bulldog once for a near fall. He goes for it again, but gets shoved off. Red does a run up the ropes back flip off his back, then a drop kick and when Abundai falls back, Red hits a leg drop on him. Red hits a huge dive and throws Abunai in the ring. When Red's on the apron, Abunai trips him and hits an Asian Cougar style leg drop to the floor. Abunai hits a neat reverse suplex. He goes for a top rope spring moonsault, but he slips. Red recovers and murderlizes Abunai with a german suplex. Abunai goes for a torando reverse DDT, but Red counters with a

face first body slam. The finish comes when Red holds on when Abunai tries a top rope rana and red hits a phoenix splash for the win. Fun match, if not sloppy in spots.

Joe Maximo vs. Angel of Da Baldies (UCW)

This is for Maximo's North Eastern Title. You know that saying that if you don't have anything good to say, don't say anything at all? Well... Joe does take a really stupid spot in this that deserves mention as Angel drops him with a face first slam onto a chair that had to be mentioned and ruined this from being a 2 line review. This is an angle as the G Street Mafia (Sledge's crew) pay off Angel to hurt Maximo. Maximo also hits a sky twister in this.

Devine Storm/SAT vs. Doring/Roadkill/Sledge/some guy with body tattoos. (unknown)

The Mikey trainees are working together against Sledge and the mystery man when Doring and Kill make the save and get hit with a bunch of the spots. I'm guessing their working heel in the match. The clock says Dec 1, 2000 on the tape, though I'm not sure that's the actual date. Storm gets killed with a bunch of power moves before Doring brings him over to tag in I think Joe Maximo, who takes over getting killed where Storm left off. The bald guy plays the face in peril in this, though he does almost kill Jose with something that started as an underhook into a turnbuckle ram into almost an underhook piledriver. Still, the Mikey guys play the world's smallest Arn and Tully as they keep the tattooed guy in the ring and get heat on him, but once he tags out they pretty much get killed. This is like a glorified squash.

Spanish Announce Team vs. Trent Acid/Joey Matthews/Christian York (IWA) :

Hey, the tape is Rob Feinstein quality with a capital "k" as the tape jumps all over the place. Donnie B explains that Johnny Kashmere is in Japan so Matthews and York are brought in as subs. At this point, York and Matthews are the NWA tag champions. The building they are in has a low drop ceiling. Trent and Jose start out and have a good segment ending with a blue thunder by Trent. Matthews and Joe work a comedy spot where they do the criss cross and where Joey stops and Joe still runs the ropes before hitting a flying fore arm. York and Matthews are acting really goofy in this. They get a 3 way brawl, SAT's get hung in the corner and they get triple groin stomped. Trent gets trapped in the ring by the SAT and gets beat up a bunch. The Maximos do throw some nice lariats. Trent fights off the SAT's with super kicks, but gets caught by Joe's Crown's Gate. The SAT hit a trifeca of moonsaults on Acid, one of which I think Red hits the ceiling with his feet. Red later goes for a diving headbutt where he moves the ceiling tiles out of the way, but misses. Trent gets the tag to Matthews and York, but after they clear the ring, York and Matthews turn on Acid leading to the SAT getting the pin. SE Finish.

Joe Maximo vs. Jose Maximo vs. Red (CZW)

This starts with a real fast pace with a lot of spots. A bunch of armdrags at the start. Red does a rana when they're out of the floor off a hockey boards. They're a really crazy spot where Red does a moonsault and Joe spears him when he's upside down on the way down. This was a pretty quick match that ends with the Maximos hitting the Spanish Fly (called the Millenium Drop at the time) on Red, but everyone rolls over and pins one another leading to a draw.

Joe/Jose Maximo vs. The Rachies (Adam Flash/Doomsday Danny Rose) (PWF)

Rose and Flash jump at the belly and throw all the SAT's together and then Rose suplexes out the Maximos before Flash hits a running lyger bomb on Red. They do an early plancha spot which is sort of goofy as both Rose and Red are both up on the apron, then Rose jumps off and goes to the floor so he can catch Red's springboard skytwister to the floor. Rose throws around the Maximos and challenges them both to tie up with him, when they do, the Maximos hit a double armwringer so Red and spring drop kick him. Flash and Rose recover quickly and use their side advantage and some double teams on the Maximos, including a double chokeslam, a double front suplex onto the top rope followed by a double kick. They do a big bump when Jose tries to hop to the top rope, Flash pushes Jose off to the floor where he lands on Red. The SAT's do some triple teaming on the Rachies and Flash ends up taking the Spanish Fly after Red did a corkscrew dive onto Rose on the floor, taking him out from making the save.

Red vs. Evan Lucky vs. Billy Bax - Ladder Match for the PWF Cruiser title :

Lucky comes in as the champion. I guess he's doing an Irish gimmick as he does this little jig and has shamrock zbas on. Each guy does spots on each other with Lucky taking over. He goes for the ladder first, but Bax and Red drop kick him down. Bax and Red try to bring in the ladder, but Red turns on Bax as the ladder is slid in half way. Lucky leg drops the ladder knocking both boys down, Red doing a back flip. Guys start climbing up the ladder and each guy pulling them off. The ladder by the way is fucking huge. If the guys climbed all the way to the top, they probably would have been hit with ceiling fans. Bax gets a near fall following a falcon arrow. He sets up the ladder in a corner. Red throws him in a corner, hits the run up the ropes kick and follows it as soon as he lands with a drop kick that was good. Lucky at one point puts the ladder on Bax and does the jig elbow onto the ladder. Bax and Red both pick up the ladder and Lucky ends up drop kicking the both of them down which was sort of contrived. Lucky hits a tornado bulldog on Red. All of a sudden, the Dino Powers and Gino Giavanni hit the ring with "The Fun Athletic Guy" Rob Feinstein (see, F.A.G... because he's suppose to be gay! It's FUNNY!). Rob distracts the referee as he feels up and other announcer gets on my hate list as asking Rob if he "came" after feeling up Mike. That's something for the nightmare file. Rob Feinstein shooting love putty into his pants after groping a referee. So anyway, as Rob goes to second base with the ref, Dino and Gino hit a back suplex neckbreaker on Lucky. When Bax attacks them, and gets beat up as well. Red sneaks in and puts the ladder on both guys. He tries a springboard move but slips and misses. He hits a springboard moonsault onto the ladder to win the match. Eh. the match was real spotty in spots, plus there's that whole Rob run in.

Overall, this was a fun tape to watch for the most part. The Back Seat Boys match is probably the best of the matches on here. If you see the SAT's on a local indy line up, it's probably worth your time to see them.

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%&%&%&%&%&%&% Super Dragon Evolution
(by Phil Schneider)

I got this tape sent to me by a certain masked wrestler who may or may not be the subject of this tape but shall go nameless. I had been hearing a massive tsunami of hype about Super Dragon's 2001 work, and since I dug his 2000 work and this was supposed to be a quantum leap I was pretty excited about this tape.

Super Dragon vs. TNT - 8/28/99

When I saw the initial match list I was fucking torqued because I figured this was going to be Super Dragon versus Savio Vega working the TNT gimmick in 1999 in Australia, which would have rocked ass BTW. This TNT however is an Australian junior heavyweight, and is quite a fine worker although he's no Savio. This is a pretty basic junior heavyweight match with SD being much more of a highspot guy then he is now. This went 2/3 falls and had a nice flow, with everything being hit well. One of the things that I am digging so much about 21st century Indy wrestling is that there is really starting to be a wide variety of styles and influences being bandied about. In the last couple of years I have seen live Cham Pain and Steve Corino work a Memphis style main event, Low-Ki and American Dragon doing BattlArts, the SAT's doing otherworldly lucharesu highspot fests and Mike Modest + Christopher Daniels working a 30 minute All Japan tag with the Westside Playaz. A couple of years ago most of the really great Indy matches were sort of similar Indy juniors matches like this one. I enjoyed this match, but compared to the stuff I have seen recently and the rest of the stuff on this tape it felt dated.

Super Dragon vs. B-Boy – 3/30/01

This was easily the most ambitious match on this tape. Super Dragon and B-Boy come in to this match trying to work a complex, spot intensive match based around bodypart selling. Stylistically the promotion takes a lot from Michinoku Pro and what they were trying to do here reminded me a lot of TAKA Michinoku v. Shoichi Funaki right before TAKA left for the WWF. That match was also based around big spots and selling of a knee, and is one of my favorite MPRO matches ever. This kind of match is hard to pull off, for it to really work, the bodypart injury has to figure into every movement made and each spot has to take that into account, add that to the fact that they were working a lot of complex spots, made the selling more difficult then it would be in older matches which had a lot of selling in them. Also they had never worked singles against each other before, while Dragon usually works guys he trains with. It is a credit to both guys that they took on such a task, and the fact they came so close to pulling it off is pretty impressive. This was a really good match, but it had flaws, which I think kept it from reaching the MOTY status that they were aiming for. The storyline here was B-Boy working Super Dragon's knee while Dragon worked on B-Boy's arm. Super Dragon did a good job of selling the knee injury, including doing an ode to Sasuke attempt at a Sasuke Special but come up limp spot. That is the secret to this kind of match, the injury has to affect every aspect of the match. There was also some really neat innovative stuff, including an Iconoclasm to the floor, and a second rope Super Iconoclasm by B-Boy both of which I have never seen before and both of which rocked. The finish of the match was neat as Super Dragon hits a Phoenix Splash and floats over into a cross armbreaker for the tap out. However one of the problems with that finish in the context of the match is that while Super Dragon sold the knee throughout, B-Boy pretty much ignored the arm when it wasn't being worked on. The fact that the body part which the final submission is

being put on, is apparently less damaged hurts the credibility of the match, you have to have both guys sell for this kind of match to work. Also much of the work on Dragon's knee seemed perfunctory rather than really heated, you got no sense that a submission would result from it, even when B-Boy put on the figure four. The fact that I am judging the match like I am, in away is a testament to it, I don't except that level of perfection from Indy work, and the flaws I point out, are there in New Japan Juniors and All Japan matches which get Match of the Decade votes. Hell most NJ Juniors don't sell accumulated damage and all those All Japan matches the submissions were even more meaningless. I really would like to see a rematch, and I really dug what this match was trying and I think both guys have it in them to achieve the goal they set out.

Super Dragon vs. Excalibur - 4/27/01

This match was trying for a more simple story then B-Boy v. Dragon, and while the ambition was smaller I enjoyed this match more. Excalibur is a fun, fun wrestler to watch, he is Mulkey level skinny, but just takes nutty freaking bumps, and despite his lack of heft can work pretty stiff. The start with some go behinds and standing switches and Excalibur endears himself to me for ever by doing the Johnny Saint grab your own foot hammerlock counter, BRITISH BABY!! I freaked out and partied. Excalibur hit a springboard knee to the back, which was just swank look as well. They did some crowd brawling, which wasn't that great and basically unneeded, and was the big flaw in this match. The ending was pretty boss, as they throw lariats, blocking the attempts, before Super Dragon hits a lariat to the back and a mega nasty front lariat, which just wastes Excalibur. He then picks him up and hits a pump handle into a piledriver move, which drops Excalibur down on a sick angle right on his head even nastier looking then his Psycho Driver, and a multiple rewind and six million dollar man slow-mo replay moment. This was a batch fun and Excalibur v. Super Dragon is my favorite match up in Revolution Pro, the middle section of the match was a little aimless, with no match long build like in the B-Boy match, but then end was just top drawer.

Super Dragon vs. Rising Son - 5/19/01

I didn't dig this as much as the other matches on the tape. Rising Son is a great flyer, but is pretty spotty and doesn't have the dangerous offense to make him look like a real threat to Super Dragon. He also blows a spot or two, and they do some cheap heat stuff, which sort of takes away from the style they normally work. There were some really impressive moments here though as Rising Son hits a picture perfect springboard rana, which very few people in the world can hit, he also becomes the only person I have ever seen hit a standing reverse hurricanrana correctly. Still as a whole match, it was the weakest of the Re-start period. These two supposedly had the best match in Rev Pro history in the finals of their Spirit Tournament, so I really need to see that.

Super Dragon vs. Excalibur 6/2/01

This was probably my favorite match on this tape, I have already confessed my Excalibur markdom and he is rocking in this, and Super Dragon is also really great. Dragon comes out in a purple outfit, which is sartorially inferior to his original black. They have a great spot early where Excalibur is bent backwards on his knees and gets double kneedropped right on his chest bending his knees back at a sick angle. They also both do sweet dives, and Excalibur hits

a lunatic spot where he gives a Bob Holly style throw powerbomb on Super Dragon, smashing Dragon's head into the top turnbuckle and Christopher Reeveing his neck. The end plays off their previous matchup, with Excalibur escaping the pump handle of lifetime incapacitation and being the guy to hit the big lariat, to set up his finisher, a double underhook piledriver which is just unreal, and career shortening. Again not as ambitious as the B-Boy match, but very high end for what they are going for, the Rev Pro guys seem to invent new fun ways to shatter vertebrae ever match.

I am a long time APW mark, and a Super 8 ECWA loyalist from way back, but there is no doubt that Revolution Pro is a contender for the best indy in America. Super Dragon is working at a really high level, and their matches are as interesting and polished as anything done in this country. Hopefully they can start drawing a little better, but I think they are slowly but surely building up a cult following.

Mike Jackson - The Last Pro Wrestler?

(by Anthony Gancarski)

Southern indie wrestling. You can't beat it with a stick.

Let me go into more detail about what I mean here. I'm not talking about OMEGA restart from last year or what passed for a Juniors tourney in Tampa recently. The crowds there are "educated" to the fact that wrestling is fake, dude, and that there is no spiritual component -- that there can't be a spiritual component -- to what goes on inside those ropes. There are spots and spectacle, and there is "good" work and "Indy MOTYCs" and fuckall.

And so what? After the matches are committed to tape, after they've been traded within a select group on the net, then what does it mean? All those "great" ECW matches are largely forgotten, or at least not spoken about. After all, what is there to say about them? "Great, if dated spots. 4.1313131313134 *s, on the US scale."

Recently, I had the pleasure of driving to Georgia and taking in a Columbus Championship Wrestling show. Though the show was loaded -- Mr Wrestling II's retirement ceremony, the return of Road Dogg to his southern roots -- the highlight of the show was Mike Jackson.

You remember Mike Jackson if you've seen enough TBS wrestling. Getting tossed around by Hawk, perhaps. Maybe you've seen the Flair match, which is okay and cool and such, but is spotty as matches between workers unfamiliar with working each other often are, with strikes that aren't as sharp as you'd hope and so forth.

But that's not the real Mike Jackson. Or at least, not the whole picture.

Mike Jackson is and was much more than a guy who jobbed out on the Superstation in bowling-shoe patterned singlets. He's a wrestler at his best in front of crowds that share the understanding that life is meaningless unless it's rooted in faith. Faith that friendship matters,

that there is a Creator and that he owns our asses. Faith in the necessity of conflict. The necessity of being who you are and of making no apologies for that.

By way of concluding this preamble to the match reviews, let me explain what I mean. The show I saw Mike on he started off with coming out and saying a few words in honor of Terry Gordy's passing. Without pausing to acknowledge the irony of faith in an EXTREME universe, he led us in a Biblically-based moment of silence for Gordy and his Freebird brothers. No one smirked. No one even thought for a minute that we were beyond such considerations.

He wiped a tear from his eye and went back to the dressing room. Then, after his opponent Chic Donovan entered to Sharp-Dressed Man, he came out and carried Donovan to a ****, 13 minute match.

"If I can just be serious for a moment...", I'd like to make it completely clear that one of the things that is so transcendent about Jackson's work is that it's rooted in the idea that wrestling is not bullshit. That for wrestling to work, you have to be able to care about the characters. To learn from them, even.

This is my problem with so much of the cable-TV wrestling over the last few years. We were never intended to care about the performers. Better instead to watch Dreamer piledrive a skank because we aren't getting laid, or watch 18 heel turns on one show, or see Ric Flair getting humiliated in one manner or another. Because that is extreme, cutting-edge, great TV, right?

It occurs to me that these extemporaneous remarks aren't telling you, by God, if the tape is worth trading for. I'm not answering the essential questions about Jackson being better or worse than Shadow Blader XVW, or if he's the new Ric Flair, or if he's capable of Canadian Violence, or if he's extreme. And I'm not going to answer those questions, because watching Mike Jackson makes me realize how useless those questions can be, what poor simulacra they are for the reasons I got into wrestling as a kid.

I watch wrestling because I want to believe. I don't want mindless comedy for comedy's sake, storyboard drafted and sanitized for my protection by some retread hacks who wrote Porky's Revenge as they do coke off of Daddy's Little Girl's cellulite pocks. I want conflict, rooted in something I can identify with.

So when I watch Mike Jackson and Alan Martin work a 35 minute match, complete with a plancha from Jackson in addition to the usual array of flying headscissors and dropkicks, I know that it counts. So what if the US Junior Heavyweight belt is a retread strap from a dead territory, or a worked title, or whatever? That's not the point. Because when they get out there and bust their asses to get a match for that belt over, I buy it.

No bullshit with toy store cowboy hats or 55 year old men tongue-probing the silicone skank of the week. Just wrestling. Just professional wrestling.

"Mike Jackson's Greatest Hits", the tape I'm ostensibly reviewing here, is very much worth seeing. You need to see him work 20 minute matches in high-school gyms in Georgia, as they are impeccably paced and as they make you realize, maybe for the last time, that wrestling, like life, doesn't have to be bullshit.

That there is a payoff in living the good, moral life. That by being true to yourself and your craft, you can create enduring art that doesn't have to obliterate what came before it to matter. That there is life beyond the lurid neon of Wal-mart and Taco Bell, and there is faith beyond the televangelist caricatures and the endless procession of ads for consumer products.

That you have to be a good person in spite of, or even because, people die in your midst. That you can't stop loving people just because people are taken from you. That life is worth risk, and that risk has to be rooted, as does wrestling or watching wrestling, in the classic leap of faith.

Eyes closed, muscles relaxed, convictions strong. What else can I say? Mike Jackson is my favorite wrestler right now.

%^^%^%^^^%^ Fighting Network RINGS World Mega-Battle Tournament Quarter-Finals,
1/21/98 (taped 11/20/97)
(by Marcel Hillie)

A new DVDVR, a new direction, as we switch gears a bit to give the RINGS some attention, courtesy of Phil Schneider's tape closet. I admit to having blown off RINGS for quite some time (seeing as how I could never stay awake through a match), but have come to appreciate the stuff for what it is. Well, that plus all the RINGS tapes that have seemed to come my way from Schneider and Dean for whatever reason. No sense wasting time, let's dive in.....

Gilbert Yvel vs. Lev Barkala

Gilbert gets extra points off the bat for coming out to DJ Kool's "Let Me Clear My Throat." I've never heard of this Barkala kid - I'm assuming Gilbert's beat Lev like he stole something, but we shall see. Both start cautiously, trading low kicks before getting tangled up in the corner. Gilbert tries to get free, but Lev keeps the clinch - looks like Lev wisely wants no part of Gilbert's strikes here. He alternates between sticking and moving and tying Gilbert up and taking him down, but Gilbert wisely falls near the ropes, forcing the ref to stand them both back up, a tactic which then backfires, as the ref calls the next one an escape, costing Gilbert a point. This happens again, as Lev seems to have a strategy here. He needs to be careful, though - whenever he shoots in, Gilbert keeps going for the big kneelift. On one Lev shoot, Gilbert tries to sneak a closed-fist punch in there, but the catches it and gives Gilbert a Yellow Card, costing him another point. Lev gets the best of another shoot, and Gilbert eats another escape, going down four points and digging something of a hole for himself here. Lev loses a point somewhere in here as he gets caught in a guillotine from one of his shoots and has to go to the ropes. Gilbert loses a point for falling into the ropes on a shoot and getting charged with an escape, which he's none too

pleased with, as well as another Yellow Card for a punch. 6 points - he'd better connect with that knee soon. Lev shoots again and takes Gilbert down again, which he gets up from, hold Lev in a guillotine for a second, and *whack!* *WHACK!* There go the big knees Gilbert were looking for the whole match. The middle rope is all that holds Lev up here, as Gilbert gets in *two more* knees before the ref thinks to step in. Lev actually does get knocked into next week, as the ref counts up to 9 and he can't get his hands up after that, so it's a KO for Gilbert at 10:47. Fun match, as Lev's plan of not giving Gilbert a chance to wind up for a big strike almost worked. Put DJ Kool back on!

Mohammed Yone vs. Masayuki Naruse

Hey, Yone with no Afro, no dye job, and a serious demeanor. Both are content with standing up at first, trading strikes that don't really connect. Once it goes to the ground, differences become apparent, as Yone is more aggressive, working to try and create an opening, while Naruse is more content to wait for Yone to leave himself open, which eventually happens, as Naruse gets a leg grapevine, forcing Yone to lose a point on an escape. On the standup, Yone is aggressive again, which eventually gives Naruse an opportunity to take Yone down. Naruse then rides him hard, making Yone expend a lot of energy before catching him in a full mount and sliding over into a side mount. Yone, again trying to make something happen, rolls over to escape, but Naruse goes with him and gets the rear mount. The choke is quickly applied, and Yone wastes no time in tapping out at 5:35. Yone went in too aggressive here, and paid for it.

Ilioukhinse Mikhail vs. Tsuyoshi Kousaka

Sucks to be Mikhail early, as no matter what he does, Kousaka has an answer for him. Mikhail cannot get an advantage, standing or on the mat, and almost has to tap out early to an armbar while Kousaka's got him folded up like a pretzel. He makes the ropes and only has to eat an escape, though. The escape from a tight situation gets a pop from the crowd. This seems to wake Mikhail up a bit, as he gets a nice takedown on Kousaka and almost gets a Juji-Gatame, before Kousaka schools him by flipping over and spinning around, catching Mikhail in a Hiza-Juji-Gatame. Mikhail goes for a fireman's carry, but can't get it all the way, giving Kousaka an opening for another guillotine, which makes Mikhail lose another point on an escape. On the stand-up, Kousaka gets another leg grapevine, but Mikhail grabs an armbar. This doesn't last long, as Kousaka counters, going for a Juji-Gatame, countered by Mikhail into a grapevine, countered again by Kousaka into an ankle-lock, and Mikhail grabs the ropes again. On this stand-up, Mikhail gets another ankle-lock, and rolls into a Hiza-Juji-Gatame. This makes Kousaka lose a point on a rope escape, drawing another round of applause. Hey, Mikhail's working his way back into this match. Hey, Kousaka just kicked the piss out of Mikhail on the stand-up. Hey, Mikhail's in a bigger hole now, losing two points on the knockdown and is down 5-1. Another stand-up, Mikhail takes him down and they get dueling ankle-locks, a duel which Mikhail wins, forcing Kousaka to work for a counter, which takes them into the ropes and earns a stand-up. Good stuff here. Another scrum on the mat, Mikhail ends up with an ankle-lock, Kousaka grabs the ropes. Strikes are traded (none of which have any real effect), and Kousaka drops his head, enabling Mikhail to grab a guillotine. Kousaka pops out (and pops the crowd) and gets a brief advantage, but Mikhail works hard and almost gets an Indian Deathlock (which would have ruled), but Kousaka gets an ankle lock and Mikhail gets the ropes. Back to the mat

quickly, and Mikhail grabs another ankle-lock and cinches it in tight. Kohasaka taps immediately at 14:16. Wow, I was thinking a fairly easy win for Kousaka early, but Mikhail toughed it out, and eventually got the chance to put it away.

Mitsuya Nagai vs. Akira Maeda

Well, I was fearing the boss booking himself a KO win at 0:10, but thankfully that didn't happen. Back-and-forth on the mat to start, and Maeda loses a quick point on an ankle-lock. Nagai lands some good kicks and slaps, but Maeda just keeps coming. Back to the mat, and Maeda gets a side headlock that goes nowhere and they get stood up. Nagai lands some good slaps and a stiff knee before Maeda takes him back down. Maeda looks like crap here; just falling down after the strikes and grinding the action to a halt Nagai works hard on the mat. Maeda flops around. Nagai works on an ankle-lock and Maeda has to take an escape. Nagai is striking well again, and Maeda takes it back to the mat. Don't know why - it's not like he's doing anything once he gets down there. Okay, now he works for a Hiza-Juji-Gatame, but Nagai quickly gets an ankle-lock, forcing another Maeda escape. Crowd is getting behind Mitsuya here. Back to the mat, and some matwork that doesn't really go anywhere gets another stand-up Nagai lets fly with a big kick that gets blocked, and he falls down. Maeda takes advantage and gets a leg grapevine. Nagai gets one of his own and turns it into a Hiza-Juji-Gatame that Maeda has to grab the ropes for. Nagai lands a good kick and we go to the mat briefly. On the stand-up, Nagai lands some more good slaps, but then goes for a knee that doesn't really connect and Maeda takes him down. Nagai takes a rope escape rather than give Maeda a chance to come up with something on the mat Nagai unloads more strikes, and Maeda drops and grabs Nagai's leg. And stays there. And stays there. While Nagai's working, mind you. The ref stands them back up eventually. Nagai with a knee, Maeda with taking it back to the mat and then backing off, letting Nagai get back up. Then, this match loses me completely as Nagai feeds the old man his leg, making it easier for Maeda to grab it and take him down again, where Brontosaurus Maeda finally shows signs of life, spinning into an ankle-lock that Nagai has to grab the ropes to escape. Blech. Strikes, grab leg, fall down, stand up. Lather, rinse, repeat. Nagai's trying, but he has nothing to work with here. Finish finally comes when, after Maeda takes Nagai down again, he goes for a straight choke, then a smother, which makes Nagai roll over, making him prey to a Maeda choke sleeper at 17:00. Post match staredown and chatting, where Nagai's telling Maeda something that earns a slap from Maeda. Everyone gets between them and Nagai gets out of there. Fuck, that was bad - I'd have preferred that 10-second knockout. I wouldn't wish this match on my worst enemy.

Dick Vrij vs. Volk Han

Volk, you've got to show me something here. I need some of that magic after Maeda-in-1997. We start, and Vrij uses his kickboxing to keep Volk at bay for a bit. Volk gets it on the ground though, and tries to make something happen, but Vrij pops free and stands up. They spar for a bit, and Vrij pops Volk with a knee to the gut that earns a knockdown. Vrij keeps up the striking with kicks, and Volk responds with these lunging front kicks that would have him in big trouble with someone who knew what they were doing on the ground. Volk's trying to make a go of this striking thing, but he's having no real effect here. They clinch in corner and get stood back up. Vrij gets some good strikes in, but Volk gets his arm, which Vrij escapes by flipping into the

ropes. Vrij starts landing low kicks basically at will. A clinch leads to a flurry from Vrij, ending with a high kick that sends Volk sprawling to the mat for Knockdown #3. 6-2, Vrij leads. More Vrij kicks, but then Volk gets it back on the mat, and Vrij gets the ropes rather than risk getting caught in some Volk magic. Three kicks back Volk into a corner, and a glancing high kick (looks better at a different angle after match) gets a knockdown for Vrij. 8-3 Vrij. On the standup, Vrij tries a couple of kicks but Volk takes it the ground and starts working for a choke. Vrij fights, but he can't hold out and taps at 7:15. Huh?

Oh man, this sucks. A Han match with NO Han matwork AND Maeda going 17:00 and looking like total shit? Fuck this, I'm popping something else in the VCR. Gimme a sec here, go read another review for a little while.....

&&*&*& ARSION on Samurai TV, 2/4/2001, taped 1/27/2001 Tokyo
(by Marcel Hille)

COME ON, ladies! Give me something good here, I'm beggin ya! To start, all the ladies coming out to say hello to the audience and Queen of ARSION Ayako Hamada says a few words. No time for pleasantries, I need some action here. Off and running with clips from the 1/5/01 Tokyo show. YOW, look at that Yoshida submission hold! Picture an inverted Cripple Crossface with the attacker's near leg held in-between the arms with the far leg grapevining the opponent's far arm. Man, Dr. Cerebro needs to steal that.

Rena Takase (#28) vs. You Yamagata (#42)

We clip the start of a battle between the 28th and 42nd - ranked wrestlers in ARSION? DAMMIT! Actually, it might be a good idea, as these Godfather-like forearms they're exchanging would have Tom shooting cheap bourbon through his nose. Only goes 5:55 in total, with Rena getting a tap-out with a Kimura Arm-lock. Rena did everything in what was shown, proving that her 14 slots advantage in the raking was deserved. Watch it if you have nothing else to watch. And even then go check to see if there's anything good on cable first.

Bionic J (#29) vs. Rie Tamada (#4)

Do all the joshi workers stumble over their lines the way ol' Jessie just did? Very blah (very clipped, fortunately) battle here, as Tamada seems to have a bit of trouble moving J around. I know, I know, who'd have thought? J with the pin off a Moonlight Bomb. Nope, that wasn't good. Unintentionally hilarious post-match interview, as J says, "It wasn't as pretty as it was expected to be..." Ain't that the truth. To quote Saukrates, Keep it movin, movin.....

HEY! That's Sakie Hasegawa! Man, I've missed her in the ring. She's interviewing Yumi Fukawa. Sorry guys, Yumi's not wearing a tiny shirt, as this interview is done in a restaurant and they're both wearing normal clothes. They shoot the breeze while cooking food at their table. Damn, I need to go dig out some Sakie matches now.

Mikiko Futagami (#3)/PIKO (#39)/PIKA (#44) vs. Chapparita ASARI (#22)/Ai Fujita (#21)/Fabi Apache (#28)

Clip to Fabi and PIKO in the ring. Fabi (the cute one, BTW) is trying here and looks to be holding the first part of this together, evidenced by how she helps PIKO and then PIKA through their spots and taking the top-rope double stomps and selling a very bad PIKA springboard dropkick. Highspot segment ensues, with ASARI and Fujita appropriately toasting their ankles. Hey, even Fabi gets into the act with a Tornado Plancha. Cool. Mikiko wants some of this action, but gets stopped by Fujita. Pretty bad sequence as Ai forgets to duck a Mikiko clothesline, so Mikiko has to raise her arm above Ai's head, to "mistakenly" nail PIKA. After some more stuff, PIKA gets the pin with The Glide (Scorpio's in-ring splash where he turns in mid-air and lands facing the opposite direction of how he took off). Futagami is noticeably absent in the portion that saw the light of day. Nothing special at all, but watchable.

Aja Kong (#6 - I think)/Mariko Yoshida (#2)/Ryo Miyake (#43) vs. Mima Shimoda (#25)/Etsuko Mita (#26)/Michiko Omukai (#5)

Clip ,clip, clip. We pick it up with Aja and Omukai in there, with Michiko getting a near-fall off an uranage after hurting her knee giving Aja a kneelift. Cute spot. Michiko goes for a punch and misses, Aja goes for an uraken and misses, and now Michiko connects with...a punch that wouldn't knock down an empty Evian bottle. Damn, Aja's even greater than I thought she was for selling that. Aja squishes Omukai but good with a top-rope elbow for a nearfall and then a brainbuster for another one. Miyake tags in and immediately earns my loathing for making her first move an airball of an uraken. She and Omukai then miscommunicate on a double-kick spot and I'm starting to feel the pain here. Michiko and Mima's axe kicks are 50-50 on looking like they'd actually hurt. Omukai then picks up Ryo up for a brainbuster and she tries to escape, but instead wiggles free, bumping on the mat head-first. Yikes. Ryo and Omukai trade urakens and then Aja comes in and hits one, and they AAA the one uraken that would look decent? Some more moves are missed and the 20:00 time limit expires. Postmatch promos follow, broken up by Yumi Fukawa hitting the ring to say goodbye, I guess. Candy Okutsu retirement feature follows. Nice little retrospective, including clips of her retirement match against Omukai that looks far better than anything I've seen on this tape yet.

Azumi Hyuga (#40) vs. Mari Apache (#10)

We're showing the whole match? Man, will wonders never cease. Basic feeling-out stuff to start until Azumi gets knocked out of the ring and Mari busts out a nice tope. Man, extra points for even attempting that. She regains control upon re-entry and then gets to stretching Azumi with a half-crab and choke sleepers, and looks like she's having way too much fun doing it. Azumi mounts a comeback with dropkick and some kicks....is Mari smiling while getting beat up? Either she's not selling, or she's just being Apache's Daughter. Mari then ups the ante by busting out the STF with an Indian Deathlock. Very nice. More stretching by Mari with La Tapatia and then a Reverse Gory Special. Bringing the pain is a Very Good Thing, especially at this point in the tape. Azumi comes back with high-risk stuff that she doesn't quite nail, then Mari regains control. Mari gets a nearfall off a Mindbender, then misses a charge and falls to the outside, giving Azumi the chance to go hit a Hokuto-ish somersault tope. Back in the ring and Azumi gets nearfalls off an missile dropkick and a Spider German Suplex. Misses a Destiny Hammer, Mari misses a lariat, Azumi hits a German Suplex, which Mari no-sells so she can nail a lariat. I nail a groan spot. Azumi misses a charge and Mari gets an Atlantida in for a few

seconds. Michinoku Driver is teased both ways, but Azumi gets a five-suplex Locomotion German Suplex sequence instead for a near-fall. Azumi gets the Destiny Hammer, but only gets two. Mari gets nearfalls with a lariat and a Lygerbomb, then kills and I mean KILLS Azumi with a crushing Tope Atomico that.....only gets two? That looked nasty as hell and probably should have been the finish. Babyface comeback stuff for Azumi here (Waki-Gatame out of a suplex attempt, more Missile Dropkicks), but we hit the 15:00 time limit. Mari made this match worth watching, but she needs to curb those no-sell tendencies. I can almost forgive it though, as Azumi hadn't really had her in trouble up to that point in the match. Almost. Mari putting the hammer down is kinda fun to watch, though.

Cut to Ayako out for a day on the town. She's dressed up like a princess and getting pulled on a rickshaw by Daddy Gran Hamada. Awwww. They go to a restaurant where she has a big lunch and daddy is content to pound the sake. They toast and Ayako can't handle it, while Gran drinks it like spring water. Yeah yeah, back to the wrestling.

Ayako Hamada (#1) vs. AKINO (#13)

That's more like it. Being the Queen, Ayako gets the only entrance that makes tape. She comes out to techno. I listen for Carl Cox to get mentioned, but no dice. Staredown to start, then some back-and-forth stuff, punctuated by a nice Ayako dropkick. AKINO gets the advantage with dropkicks of her own and some Otani bootscrapes....hey, HEY! Lay off Ayako's face! Cool segment follows, as AKINO goes for a body vice, but gets reversed into a Double-Leg Indian Deathlock. Regular Deathlock follows, then a Bow-And-Arrow and a pinning predicament off the Deathlock. All this work for submission holds is a Good Thing. They must have heard me, because then AKINO turns an Ayako Majistral into an inverted Crippler Crossface, then a straight Crossface before Ayako gets a rope break. Ayako regains the advantage and goes for her top-rope Quebrada, but gets knocked to the floor, giving AKINO the chance to land a nice Tope Con Hilo. AKINO keeps it up with a springboard dropkick for a nearfall, but Ayako sneaks in Daddy's Headbutt to get back the momentum. Two authoritative Power Bombs let Ayako get that Quebrada for a nearfall. Missile Dropkick sends AKINO to the floor. Ayako calls for and gets an Asai Moonsault that sends them into the first row. Back in, and AKINO avoids the Ayakonoclastm, but not the Hama-Chan Cutter for another nearfall. AKINO looks way out of it, though, and the ref checks for a pulse before letting the match go on. AKINO with a Backdrop Suplex, which Ayako no-sells (groan), but #2 does the trick and #3 gets a nearfall. AKINO eats a shotei off the ropes and another to block a Juji-Gatame attempt, hits a running forearm, misses another one, and here comes the Spin Kicks. Three put AKINO down for the count at 12:53. Fun match, no beef besides the no-sell.

Well, that was better. I know that this clips show isn't the best ARSION has to offer, but the last two matches were enough to make we want to track down some more. This isn't an Earth-moving show or anything and the clipping is damn aggravating, but there's some good wrestling, and in this world of swerves, alliances, coalitions, and nonsensical Sports Entertainment here in the States, that can get me to invest a couple hours these days.

IWA MID-SOUTH KING OF THE DEATH MATCH TOURNAMENT- 6/1/2001;6/2/2001

(PAS= PHIL SCHNEIDER, TKG= TOM KARRO-GASSNER, DHR= DEAN RASMUSSEN)

"Your total disregard of the human consequences is almost sickening. We were just talking about the DVDVR boys~! and their inability to appreciate wrestling as an art and not some sicko circus act."

- Randall – wrestlingrandall@hotmail.com

TKG: I had been avoiding writing about 2001 IWA Mid-South KOTDM for a couple days now. My major memory of watching it the first time was that it was endless, it seemed like it would never end. Saturday morning I decided that I couldn't put it off any longer. I decided to go at it full on heart of darkness style. I locked myself in a room with a notepad, the KOTDM, a case of Schlitz, my Cd with the 28 alternative takes of the Stooges "Loose", and a key to shotgun the Schlitz with. I normally like to use a knife for shot gunning, but thought I'd be better off without a knife.

PAS: During me and Tom's simultaneous unemployment stints he came over with a case of Icehouse and the enormous two tape IWA King of the Death Match Tourney show. I was planning to go and train that day, so I stayed sober for the majority of the first tape. However the hypnotic allure of Indiana filth cutting each other with glass overwhelmed my desire to become the next Great White Hope, and I ended up succumbing to booze and blood. At some point Marcel came over and feigned disgust at the proceedings, but much of the second tape of this epic is a blur. However there are portions which have been soberly rewatched so I am able to give an overview worthy of this event.

DHR: Every Friday and Saturday, my wife waits tables at a Chinese restaurant that she has been working at for fifteen years. I spend this time watching the youngsters and- after the punkins are asleep- watching huge amounts of the Professional Wrestling with whomever shows up. Being a good parent and a thoughtful husband I don't watch shit like this in front of them, saving it to inflict it upon Mark, Ryan or Hangman Tim- depending who was visiting at the time. Let me say that I have no pretensions about being above garbage wrestling- I fucking LOVE good garbage wrestling. The problem is finding operative word "good" garbage wrestling- and this tournament achieved that state in DEFINATELY two matches and came close a couple other time- which makes it heads and shoulders above the next US attempt at such- with the XPW tourney from a while back achieving only one truly transcendent match (Supreme vs Kronus). Good Garbage wrestling springs from a basis in solid Professional Wrestling. Bad Garbage Wrestling is a shortcut around solid Professional Wrestling and you get a lot of that in this baby. The other thing that you have to keep in mind is that there is pretty big body of work to compare this tournament too in terms of Garbage Wrestling. It has to be compared to Funk vs Cactus Jack Duel Of The Wilds. It has to be compared to Headhunter A vs Headhunter B. It has to be compared to Onita vs Funk and Onita vs Tenryu. Colon vs Abdullah. Pogo vs Matsunaga. Matsunaga vs Kasai. Funk vs Sabu. Onita vs Hayabusa. And it ultimately must be compared to the two Honma vs Yamakawa matches- the pinnacle of the artform. Anyway, we would sit around on Friday and Saturday nights for three solid weeks and watch as much as we could stomach. We finally got to the final and Mark is quoted as saying, "I better get a Certificate of Completion for watching this ! whole fucking thing." I think he enjoyed it more than

he let on. Tim lucked out and pretty much only saw the two really great matches- Bull Pain vs Hido and NecroButcher vs 2 Tuff Tony. Ryan made the best jokes and I will steal both he and Mark's and Tim's jokes at will and credit them with NOTHING! HAHAAHAHA!

KOTDM DAY 1, 1st ROUND

TKG: The ring announcer for day one of the KOTDM is some guy in Teevas. Cause Teevas are hardcore. There is some skinny girl in a bikini being passed around the audience. I've been to northern Kentucky and Indiana. One of the things I liked about the area was all the corn fed girls. I have no use for these eating disorder girls that populate the Northeast. That said I have no idea, how IWA found the one anorexic girl in Indiana.

DR: The gal in the bikini reminded me of when I was working in a tee-shirt factory in my college era years. The average looking secretary that would walk out to the production area would be assigned the most fuckable status by we pathetic fucks with nothing else to look at. I get the feeling that most of the audience worked in similar jobs so this wouldn't much of a stretch to assign her a goddess-like designation.

SUICIDE KID VS. RICHARD X----BARBED WIRE BASEBALL BAT MATCH

TKG: Suicide Kid wins this with a crippler cross face with the barbed wire baseball bat.

Wrestling is an interesting art form. It's about communicating emotions without the use of verbal language. Wrestling can sometimes communicate things that language just can't. I've always been a fan of wrestling that communicated through a narrative structure. But wrestling is not just a narrative art; it's also a visual art.

Peter Greenway is a movie director who I occasionally enjoy who comes from a painting background. He structures his movies like paintings, less concerned with narrative motifs than with visuals and painterly visual motifs. There is a lot of wrestling which is built on visual motifs instead of narrative ones, sometimes at the expense of narrative ones. This is one of the reasons that spot-fest wrestling and garbage wrestling got along so well. Both of them are built on the visuals. This isn't to say that spots or garbage visuals can't be used to tell a narrative. But its wrestling built on cool/innovative visuals.

DHR: The depth of Garbage Wrestling when done right is so much deeper than spot-fest wrestler. Where is the room for hate and love and SHEER TRIUMPH OF THE WILL to carry a part of the story in a spot-fest match? It can be done but it isn't intrinsically built in like it is in a garbage match. The great garbage matches can build to such a sick, depraved, ghastly climax that it is a cleansing experience for your soul. A spotfest never get above the Joey Chitwood vicarious stuntshow thrill level. Garbage wrestling can have such vast quantities of ugly, ugly soul and it can be so harrowing and cleansing when done right. Spot-fest hasn't produced THOSE particular goods yet.

TKG: The barbed wire assisted submission is a cool visual. Bah!! Who am I kidding Suicide Kid/Richard X isn't Peter Greenway.

This is just a shitty match. Richard X works the "Black Muslim Science-Fiction Geek gimmick. He doesn't do any mic work, but I hope he incorporates Yahweh Ben Yahweh and Dr. Who into them. Suicide Kid looks like he's "working" a meth dealer gimmick. He's probably a better dealer than he is a wrestler.

Axl (on commentary) puts both these guys over as technical wrestlers and the "next generation of hardcore". And the two move the bat out of the way so as to show good sportsmanship and do some of their "technical wrestling". Bad move. Horrible punches, horrible kicks, a laughable fujiwara armbar, and a whole bunch of stuff so botched that I can't figure out what they were even trying to do. Turns out Axl is really a good color commentator as he does a good job covering for all this.

At one point in match they kind of made me believe they were going for a double count out, which in theory is really cool for a Death Match tourney. Maybe I just wanted both of these guys out.

Post match Kid and X shake hands and hug. Ian on some level is a smarter booker than Paul E was. Ian does the whole super old school, opening matches being competitive prelim guys that start with a handshake and ends in handshake, middle of card is face v. heel where there maybe a heel tease of handshake followed by a Fuerza kick or other heelish move, then main event is two guys who hate each other so much that there's not even the chance of feigning a handshake. I've always liked that as how to lay out a card. Paul E. never seemed to get that. Ian kind of does.

PAS: I was into Richard X's gimmick. I grew up in Berkeley California, and my highschool had a sizable Black Muslim presence. I blocked for a backfield consisting of Jihad Akbar at fullback, Khalid Shabazz at halfback and Ayub Abdul Rachman at Quarterback, thus I mentally justified any blocking errors as my own personal response to Louis Farrakhan's anti Semitism. Being surrounded by so many NOI's I actually knew a bunch who were really into Sci-Fi, not so surprising from members of a religion whose iconography includes space ships and mad scientists.

This was the most aggressively backyardish of all the matches on the show, the actually wrestling sections were comically bad and the bumps were big, but poorly set up. There are rumors of Suicide Kid having good matches with American Kickboxer but he was forced to carry his opponents throughout this tourney and that is clearly not the right role for him.

DHR: They may have achieved an acceptable level of wrestling match as a superlowgrade highspot fest if it didn't have any ideas about being a garbage match. The punches SUCKED, the hate wasn't there, the intensity wasn't there. The Michinoku Driver off the ladder was the

best spot and it set up the finish which is cool. I'm chalking this up as wrong two wrestlers in the wrong kind of match.

UNCLE HONKEY VS. MARK WOLF-BARBED WIRE BOARD MATCH

TKG: Uncle Honkey is about a Ronnie Gosset sized guy in overalls. He normally works as a manager. I can't decide if he's a better or worse wrestler than Rob Hartog.

I have no idea why you would have a manager work a competitive nine-minute match against your lightheavyweight champion. So despite my earlier defense, Ian isn't that smart of a booker.

This is just a shitty, shitty match. They have to do absurd things to position themselves properly for the props. Just shitty all the way through. Again they shake hands at end of match.

Post match Wolf challenges Suicide Kid for second round. HOLLY CRAP!! Suicide Kid vs. Mark Wolf!! Now I remember why I didn't want to watch this.

PAS: In some ways Uncle Honky personifies all that this promotion and this tourney stands for. A morbidly obese man, sloppily falling into barbed wire. A more talented observer of human nature would expand on that analogy, but I will limit myself to guessing that Uncle Honky may actually be Ian Rottens shoot Uncle.

DHR: Mark Wolf was the secret quite okay worker in this tournament. His punches weren't nauseatingly bad and he bumped all over the ring for the immobile and Ottmanesque Mr Honkey. At least Uncle honkey took a few bumps before blowing up completely and then took one after the defibulator looked to be the next gimmick in the match. This match did suck a tremendous amount of dick though. And I hate the Indie postmatch handshake- and they did like fourteen in this tourney. The BIG upside was the GREAT midwestern accented post match promos, what with the "I PROVED I'm hardcore by bleeding and bleeding like I'm HARDCORE!!" and "I came from Ohio to be with the most hardcore motherfuckers in the world and I proved I'm HARDCORE!" bandied about by every scrapple eating garbage wrestler in the whole Midwest who made the trip.

ROLLIN HARD VS. DERANGED--- BARBED WIRE BOARD MATCH

TKG: The Rollin Hard rats kind of spook me out.

This is your first face v. heel structured match. The audience chants "Prison Bitch" at Deranged, and Axl makes his first homophobic joke on commentary at only 41 minutes into tourney.

The one thing I can say for Rollin, is he does go face first into the barbed wire board. Deranged bleeds and bleeds. He bleeds this dark black color blood, which drips and drips. Deranged goes for a but splash into nothing. Deranged leans over bottom rope and then for the first time in my life I wished Vince McMahon were on commentary as Deranged vomits onto floor. He vomits and then he vomits some more and then he vomits more. His blood drips into the pool of vomit.

The end result is an amazing visual, which someone really should commission Wayne Thiebaud to paint.

PAS: The ref in this match has extremely close set eyes and a huge nose and looks like the product of a fourteen year old girl who received visits from all four of her brother and her father, thus leaving the parentage in complete doubt. I would imagine that the vomiting might have been caused by Deranged nicking his testicle on the barbedwire, they did the total AAA slow-mo replay of the vomit which was a nice touch. Rollin Hard is playing a hip-hop Akeem gimmick, as a white redneck with an Afro wig and Blackman Inc. t-shirt, unbelievably this gimmick has actually gotten less offensive then when I first saw it, as he at least jettisoned the fried chicken.

DR: The ref looked more like he was once the undeveloped twin who stuck out of the shoulder of his fully developed twin brother. He ate his way to dominance of the body of his host twin brother and now referees for IWA Mid-South.

The vomiting was repulsive and grotesque but not in an uplifting way. It goes against the whole feel of the room. The IWA MidSouth crowd is insecure and scared, projecting these weaknesses through the embrace of brutality and power of shitheadedly dead-end and quasi-artless things like Garbage Wrestling, gas-huffing and Speed Metal. They are like all of us former current members of the US underclass. They AREN'T like a Kulas Cut Open ECW or Supreme On Fire XPW crowd where they actually go into the realm of depravity and repellent evil. The vomit was on that end of the spectrum. Thus the vomiting was pissing in the face of the fans. And the match really sucked a dick in a lumbering, non-athletic, Mabel With A Bladejob vs Johnny Grunge kinda way. And the vomiting is the set-up for the finish. HERE! HERE!

RUGBY THUG VS. TOWER OF DOOM---THUMBTRACK MATCH

TKG: I dig the Rugby Thug gimmick. For a rugby player he doesn't throw good punches. Maybe he plays on the wing.

Tower of Doom is working the second white hip-hop gimmick of the night as Big Daddy Doom. Tower of Doom has gotten a lot better since I last saw him. As he's actually watchable. He throws the best punches of the card thus far. Well all the punches up till this match have been horrible. But he punches well by regular standards. He has good strikes all around, a nice elbow and a nice looking protected headbutt. He also takes DDT well. He still isn't that good at rope running and looks awkward in the ring, but his strikes have improved. I am just pleasantly surprised by a watchable Tower of Doom.

One of the odd things about the tourney is how many safe chairshots are used in a Death Match Tourney. Vince could learn something from Ian. The first chairshot to the head is used in this match. And it leads to the pin.

PAS: The finish of this was really fun as Rugby Thug fills Big Daddy Dooms hoodie with thumbtacks, places it on his head and smashes him with a chair, neat and innovative garbage

finish. Also the Thug kept his English accent for a good 70% of the post match promo, only slipping into drawl on occasion.

DHR: Tower Of Doom looked better than he did in Big Japan- the only other time I've seen him. He did a couple nifty moves for such a big guy. I dug his punches even if his movement in the ring wasn't quite as stellar as a young bamBam Bigelow or anything. Rugby Thug made no impression on me at all. His punches sucked. He bumped really well. I would need to see him in a straight wrestling match since he wasn't brawling like a motherfucker or anything. He sold well in this. I wasn't feeling the elation of the fun of garbage wrestling in this match though. Don't hover over the pile of thumbtacks, fellas- beat the hell out of each other.

CHRIS HERO VS. CORPORAL ROBINSON - THUMBSTACK MATCH

TKG: Corporal Robinson facially looks like the offspring of Don Frye and Don Frye's mother.

Chris Hero comes into the match with Joe Jacobi level sweat from the pre-match sports entertainment. Hero does have great heel charisma.

Robinson has good punches and a Chris Adams superkick. Hero also has great stiff strikes. There are a couple really botched spots, somehow Robinson takes a backdrop without Hero ever throwing one, and Hero way overprotects on his tombstone piledriver. Axl continues to be the best color man in the business as he covers for missed spots really well.

This match was much better than I had remembered it being. It's the first actual objectively good match on the card.

PAS: This was a fun match, Hero seems much more suited to straight wrestling, then death match stuff, and they worked a wrestler v. brawler subtext. The prematch Hero v. Kickboxer SE stuff actually made me want to see a match between the two, so it served it's purpose all though it was rather lengthy.

DHR: Corporal Robinson was GREAT. He was in my homeroom in high school wasn't he? This match was good. It had a fun story (Chris Hero is a pussy and Robinson wants to punch him the face and does.) that gets funner (Chris Hero is smarter than the wacky redneck and cheats the purehearted survivalist militia guy.) Hero was great as the pansy who got in all of his shots like the TRUE son of Skandor Akbar. Or something. This was a good match but it wasn't really a garbage match, since the garbage elements are tertiary. I dug the cheating. Hero's finisher is fabulous.

BULL PAIN VS. HIDOH - BARBED WIRE BASEBALL BAT MATCH

TKG: Hidoh comes out to "Sharp Dressed Man", the same song that Chic Donovan is currently using. I'm guessing "Sharp Dressed Man" is the theme song of men who feel a need to brag about their sexual prowess. You've got to kind of feel sorry for Hidoh. At the end of the night he has to always question himself; "Did she really enjoy that? She used to sell for Bad Nurse."

This is a surprisingly good wrestling match. Hidoh's best match ever. Dean thinks it may be Pain's best match as well. I'll need to re-watch the Pain vs. Dundee feud before; I'd go that far.

Unlike X vs Kid they go to bat immediately. Every spot in this match looks good; Pain controls most of the offense. Hidoh actually sells well and then gets these quick bits of comeback offense in. The brawling on the outside works well. The changes of momentum in the match are triggered realistically.

I've watched this a bunch of times and this is just a really well executed match. Best match of tourney.

Also during the brawling Pain throws Hidoh into the wall by the backstage area. You get a peak backstage where you can watch Teeva boy pitch woe to one of the rats.

PAS: This was shockingly good stuff, I have always dug Bull Pain, but Hidoh has been at best a non-entity in most of the matches I have seen him in. This was more of an ECW style match then a death match, as most of the big moves were wrestling spots or chair spots. I would have like to see Pain go farther in this tourney as he seems to really know how to mix in wrestling spots as part of a hardcore environment. Hidoh did some nice chair spots including placing an unfolded chair over Pains head and smashing him with another chair (which didn't look too contrived and looked really brutal, while probably being pretty safe) and hurling a chair in the air and lariatting it into Pain for the finish. What makes this match even more impressive, is that Hidoh breaks his arm after landing wrong on a splash. Pain would have made a great regional heel, to bad he wasn't working 15 years ago.

DR: The key is the fact that all the big spots didn't look contrived and looked more like what you would do if the chair was within reach. Also big is that Hido's selling is so much better than everybody else up to this point. Ditto Bull Pain. I think this is the TRUE meaning of Meltzer's "Ring Polish". Both sell the damage like they are being beaten with chairs and barbed-wire bats and NOT like EXTREME WRESTLERS! selling damage from a chair by popping right back up. You bring the audience into your match by conveying how it FEELS and they both pull that off early and it allows them to build up to a big finish. The crowd will buy into the PAIN seemingly inflicted not the visual of the "stunt". They got the basics down more than everybody else in this tourney up to this point. I think the other big thing is that Hido is competent highflyer in this- his dropkick is peppy and he gets perfect rotation on his moonsault. They brawl like motherfuckers and it's a LOT of fun.

AXL ROTTEN VS. SHANK DORSEY---BARBED WIRE SALT MATCH

TKG: Axl decides to do a comedy match in the middle of a deathmatch tourney. Axl does some comedy micwork, gets the crowd to chant cocksucker at Shank (prison gimmick), and then works a comedy match. I'd rather watch Hirota.

Shank doesn't impress me, but then he doesn't get to do much either. He's definitely not as good as the Shank who tagged with Lazz. He throws some sub-Bob Armstrong jabs, which actually look good compared to Axl's sub-Dusty level stuff here.

PAS: This sucked ass. The Rotten brothers take basically zero bumps in this whole tourney. Shank Dorsey along with Disturbed and Mr. Insanity are guys who were brought in for this tourney, from even smaller sleazier Indy garbage promotions. For these guys getting squashed by Axl Rotten in a comedy match in front of 125 degenerates is the big time, its their Wrestlemania. Something both pathetic and endearing about that, we all need a dream. Axl owed it to Shank Dorsey to try harder then he did.

DHR: Well, keep in mind that Axl Rotten is a.... uh.... LIMITED wrestler to begin with and HE MAILS IT IN HERE. Shank Dorsey was thoroughly fabulously sleazy in how I picture sleazy MidWesterners to be. Too much pork, too much carcinogens in the air, no clean water to speak of, no constant source of sunshine. He is to this tournament like Cham Pain is to those old OMEGA shows we would go to- a mirror of the crowd. You can judge a city by who shows up for the wrestling in a local armory. The great thing about going to OMEGA is that it was the epitome of North Carolina. Everybody is attentive to the action in the ring, smart mark comments made too audibly will get your throat righteously slit by a father of two who doesn't need you ruining his sons' good time. Cham Pain stopped himself from cussing when he was talking to Schneider because there were older women within earshot. It was like I was at my mother's family reunion in Jamesville, NC. I assume that Indiana is like this crowd. Too much scrapple, too many fumes but a healthy appreciation of the Professional Wrestling- he has some Japanese tapes but likes his CZW tapes more, probably has Bolt Thrower cranking in his 87 Escort, has a steady girlfriend and they order stromboli and watch TV on the couch in the dark a lot. Since they are together, the phone doesn't get shut off anymore and they can afford a decent night out every couple weeks. They stay inside now and contemplate the next big step in their relationship. She goes gets margaritas with her old friends from school once a week and he gets to go see the wrestling at the armory. It's actually uplifting in my fucked impression of a filthy, toxic-drenched MidWest. Maybe it's different. I'm assuming by the crowd that it's not.

PAUL E SMOOTH VS. MEAN MITCH PAGE-----BARBED WIRE SALT MATCH

TKG: Day one never ends.

And its two gay gimmicks in a row. Sheesh! Paul E has a tiger print jacket which is swank.

Paul E has some talent. I like his top rope chair assisted Kevin Sullivan foots stomp.

I am kind of disappointed that Ian didn't have the guy with the gay Paul E. gimmick wearing a Yarmulke.

PAS: Paul E. has a double gimmick, as he is doing a Paul E. Dangerously gimmick, along with a Brittney Spears Boyfriend gimmick. His Brittney Spears gimmick is a lot like LAZZ as he does

audience lap dances and such, although he does them with a look of hate on his face, possessing none of the whimsy that makes LAZZ so awesome.

DHR: I thank God for IWA MidSouth. If looks are anything, Page looks like a guy who would be deeply into the production of snuff films in the Phillipines if it weren't for IWA MidSouth. He's probably a sunday school teacher or something in reallife and- if so- his gimmick works like a MOTHERFUCKER. For me anyway.

2 TUFF TONY VS. MR. INSANITY---4 CORNERS OF PAIN MATCH

TKG: Mr. Insanity is one of the more anonymous looking indy guys I've ever seen. That said he's really fun, and a cool little discovery. I kind of want to see his steel cage match with King Kong Bundy and any of his feud with Bobby Blaze.

I like the section in the middle of the match where they chop each other. All the props are used well in the match. And the in ring and out of ring parts come together smoothly. The light tubes don't break on the finish, so the audience chants "One more time". Tony obliges them and does it a second time. I hate when that happens.

Its at this point in tape watching that I had sudden craving for Piroulines.

PAS: I liked this match a ton when I first watched it, although it doesn't hold up so well on replay. This match had the most big bumps, and athletic spots of any match of the tourney. Mr. Insanity may bleed the most, of any of the guys, and he isn't afraid to take a King's Cross on a barbed wire board. He also tried a Van Terminator which 2 Tough countered by dropping the chair down causing Insanity to land back first on it. Did not have enough build and selling, and the repeat finish hurts the match a bit, but still right up there with the best of U.S. garbage wrestling.

DHR: Mr Insanity had the best mullet in the whole Ohio River Valley. Zubaz cut-offs is nice touch. Considering that this is y'all's favorite match and mine is NecroButcher vs Too Tough Tony, maybe Too Tough Tony is the best Garbage Wrestler in America. My beef with this match is the shitty selling. Mr Insanity gets a legdrop driving his face into thumbtacks and he sells it like a particularly stiff knife edge chop. Too Tough Tony makes this match with the cool headbutts and goodlookin' punches to make the movement to each spot more logical. Tony also makes the lightbulb smashing across the head of Insanity look all spectacular and shit- a quality that made the spots in the NecroButcher match so cool. He also sells all the spots well- especially the powerbomb into the thumtacks. The finisher should have been the fucking CHOICE looking Reverse gory Driver into the barbed-wire. They couldn't top that. Everything after that looked weak in comparison. The Van Daminator spot was horrendous. The K Driller should have been the finisher if they HAD to keep going but this fucking thing never ends. This SHOULD have been TWICE as good but it sacrificed a good match for few added shitty spots. And when the light bulbs DON'T BREAK when you jump off the TOP MOTHERFUCKING ROPE and land on top of them with ALL YOUR WEIGHT what could POSSIBLY expose the business more? He should NEVER do that spot again. Too Tough Tony I dig though. I don't get excited

about seeing Mr Insanity again yet. This came REAL close to completely falling to shit by the end.

NECRO BUTCHER VS. AMERICAN KICKBOXER-4 CORNERS OF PAIN MATCH

TKG: This was a lot better than I remembered it being. I think the first time I watched tourney I was so surprised by the Mr. Insanity match that this seemed under whelming.

This is face vs. face. American Kickboxer is still selling the back from the angle with Hero earlier. Necro Butcher has a really cool look, until his belly gets exposed.

This is a very different match then the one before it. The Insanity v Tony match was more about the spots and the props used well. This is all about the stiffness; the props seem to cause problems. Necro throws really stiff chops and Kickboxer has the good-looking stiff kicks. Necro throws a stiff as fuck lariat to Kickboxer's belly, which boxer bumps well for. It actually looked like an intentional spot. But they do have problems with the size difference between the two, and most of the non-striking wrestling sections of match look awkward. Still a fun stiff match.

At this point if you eliminated the first four matches and the Axl match, you would have been left with five matches that I would more than gladly paid to see.

PAS: This was a lot of fun, although I think a straight wrestling match between the two would have been better. The prop use was awkward, and Kickboxer is a wrestler I like too much to see carved up like that. The in-ring stuff was really good though. The story of this match didn't really allow Necro to be a bump machine, which is where he at his best, he was so much bigger then AK, so Kick did most of the bumping. Kickboxer also does a really great shaking paralyzed guy sell on the garbage bump, which makes it mean more then most of the stunts in this tourney. Kickboxer cuts a shoot promo about how banged up he is, which may be the best indy shoot promo ever.

DHR: This match is fucking great. Kickboxer is fun in this, making with the kicks early. The first lariat is fucking GREAT and it's the best part of the match- as it looks like that double dropkick by SUWA that comically blasts the opponent across the ring with the force. NecroButcher pusses out on the Sunset Flip into the bulbs and the Asai Moonsault Variation that Kickboxer hits more than makes up for it. I dug this match quite a bit more the second time I watched compared to the first viewing. The wiley little guy getting the best of the big guy is all done really well and the match's spots look really big and beautiful like a good batch of garbage spots should. NecroButcher sells really well and that helps tremendously when faced with trying to get this match over with the crowd when they are looking at such a GIGANTIC size difference. NecroButcher takes the bumps necessary to get the offense of kickboxer's over. Kickboxer takes the bumps with true gusto so the crowd gives him their sympathy. Classic wrestling psychology lifts this above the rest. The modified lucha cum mempho ending was cool also. This is in the Garbage Matches That Work Category so upon second veiwing we have THREE real transcendent US garbage matches in this tournament.

PETER B. BEAUTIFUL VS. IAN ROTTEN--FANS BRING THE WEAPONS MATCH

TKG: Peter B. Beautiful “the hardcore homosexual” is your third homophobia bating gimmick of the night. This is a worse beating than New Jack/Chad Austin. The crowd chants “Kill the queer!” for most of the match. I wish there was a soap that could wash this filth off me.

PAS: This was repulsive, the sick thing was that you could tell the kid didn’t know he was being shot on, as he is cooperating during the match. Ian then cuts some insider bullshit about Peter not selling for people or something, and then talks about how this proves he is hardcore. What a bunch of crap, any no talent toad can take liberties with someone, work a good match to impress me you corpulent festering sack of shit.

DHR: I think all the insider stuff and noncooperation was a work.

CASH FLO VS. NICK MONDO—FANS BRING THE WEAPONS MATCH

TKG: NICK! NICK! NICK! This would be the main event with the “two guys who hate each other so much that there’s not even the chance of feigning a handshake”. Besides the unprofessionalism of Ian stiffing Peter b. it also hurt this match, as the crowd didn’t pop for the stiffness, as much as they should have. Both guys come in with absurdly worked weights. Bull Pain vs. Hidoh was the best wrestling match of the program, Nick Mondo vs. Cash Flo is the best two guys beating each other. Every time I see Nick Mondo I like him more. He works his gimmick well. Half the workers on the garbage scene work insane/crazy gimmicks—Nick makes the gimmick work and gets it over without having to wear a mental institution costume. Nick hits his spots perfectly, has good kicks, and great worked punches. The audience that hadn’t seen him before quickly gets behind him. Cash Flo throws stiff chops but isn’t particularly good at some of the wrestling sections. And both wrestlers know how to take advantage of the props. And you just have this extended two guys beating each other section: where they go in and out of hitting each other with props to hitting each other. It works. This isn’t “guys dragging each other by the hair brawling”, this is guys beating each other all around brawling. Nick earns even more respect from me with the finish of the match. When his finisher doesn’t break the light tubes, the crowd chants “One More Time!!!” And instead of exposing the business by listening to them, he just breaks the tubes with a different move that makes sense to hit from where he landed.

PAS: This was pretty nice, really heated brawl which worked as intense bloody wrestling, not as Mid-Atlantic Scientific wrestling with lightbulbs and handshakes, like a lot of hardcore stuff. Cash-Flo isn’t very good, and looks like Val Venis as titty bar bouncer, but he can take a deliver a beating. Mondo is really great as he can punch and kick better than any garbage worker in the U.S., and takes the high end bumps.

DHR: The Road Warriorlike no-selling of the thumbtacks by Mondo was strike one. The hitting of Cashflow with the lightbulb and not breaking it is strike two. For the most part, this match was fucking horrible. Wandering around, weak punches, shitty looking garbage spots, blown actual wrestling spots. The knife edge chops were nice and Mondo kicks were fun but the rest of this match sucked a dick. Mondo is Sabu with two good knees. The third strike is that he makes

his big comeback final DIRECTLY after going face first into barbedwire OFF THE MOTHERFUCKING TOPROPE. Did the barbed wire FIRE HIM UP and give him astounding superpowers? WOW! He should turn to fighting crime. Strike Four was the shitty botched finisher where TWICE in one match they can't break a fucking fluorescent lightbulb. There. I think I qualified all this Nick Mondo worship.

TKG: And that's the end of day one. Day one is much better than I remember it being-6 good matches on a twelve-match card. If you include the Tower of Doom match, it's 7.

DHR: I count TWO good garbage matches (Hido vs Bull Pain, American Kickboxer vs NecroButcher) and one good regular match with some garbage stuff thrown in (Chris Hero vs Corporal Robinson). The rest are either nice tries with too many flaws to recommend, matches that were better than they should have been but not actually good, or matches that are complete shit.

DAY 2!

TKG: And we're into the quarterfinals. New ring announcer in an ironed shirt and tie. I don't know if that's more or less absurd than Teevas.

SUICIDE KID VS. MARK WOLF-BARBED WIRE TABLES MATCH

TKG: Mark Wolf vs. Suicide Kid....Aw FUCK! I didn't want to see this. The first two minutes of this match feel like an eternity. This is a well laid out match if either of these guys had execution. I've watched a lot of Tommy Rich matches, and Tommy used to share his gig with his opponents, passing the same gig back and forth for both of them to blade. These days everyone has their own blade, no sharing. Tommy Rich was hardcore. The commentator says that Wolf teamed with Todd Morton earlier this year. I would have rather seen Todd Morton. Hell, beyond want, I need to see recent Todd Morton.

PAS: I remember nothing about this match, nothing at all. I seem to have a vestigial thought that it sucked.

DHR: They did a bunch of armdrags successfully. They blew everything else in the opening sequence though. Wolf threw a Leslie-level lariat which is worth a few rewinds for the wrong reasons. Suicide Kid hits the barbed wire with gusto but they do a chinlock so he can get the barbed wire out of his pants which is as indie and bushleague as you can imagine. The Blockbuster by Suicide looked good and he sold landing on a batch of barbed wire perfectly fine. Wolf's bulldog onto the broken table was neat looking. Suicide hits the Marifuchi finisher thingy to set up finish- a finish which is the AMAZINGLY stupid elbow drop from the rafters. This was perfectly fine low grade garbage wrestling with a fabulous idiotic stunt to finish it off. I thought I'd get on the positive tip for the second day.

RUGBY THUG VS. ROLLIN HARD-STAPLE GUN MATCH

TKG: Oh God just makes this end. Rather than actually reviewing this match I am going to fantasy book the rugby thug face turn. After every match that Rugby Thug wins, he forces his

opponent to sing the Candyman. If the opponent refuses or messes up the lyrics. Thug forces him to drink beer out of his shoe. Thug beats rollin Hard so many times that he begins to learn the verses. First match Hard has no verses; he eventually builds knowledge as the series continues. Eventually Hard knows them well enough that Thug flubs a verse. Thug earns the respect of the fans by drinking the beer out of his own shoe, thus showing his loyalty to his own personal moral code of ethics even if it hurts him. I think it would be pretty endearing and work in a kind of RVD vs Sabu fighting to earn respect kind of way.

PAS: Instead of reviewing this match I am going to tell a Rugby story My first ever Rugby game was two weeks after I arrived in college, the team went up to Annapolis to scrimmage against the Naval Academy. The Navy had 5 full sides of players, while American had 15 guys and two Freshmen subs (Me and my buddy Abe.) We played the first 20 minutes and Navy subbed in a fresh 15, then after another 20 minutes they subbed in another fresh team, now everyone is exhausted and there is still more Rugby to be played. My coach gives us a rousing speech the gist of which is that "Rugby is played all over the world, in Wales you have people who mine coal 6 days a week and play Rugby on the seventh, so you have to go out there and play like Welsh Coalminers." Invigorated by the pep talk we go out and finish the last 20 minutes with spirit. Later that night we all went to frat party held at the fraternity house of one of our teammates Chigger (Who was thrown out of a bar once for masturbating in front of a waitress.) One of the dipshit frat boys drunkly goes up to Shirpa (who was a Chinese kid who stood about 5'5) and punched him. Shirpa responded in perfect monotone (He didn't speak with an accent, but he spoke like a robot especially when drunk) "You can't do that to me I'm a Welsh Coalminer" he then proceeded to headbutt this kid right in the face smashing his nose, and causing the frat boy to break out in tears. Shirpa responded to this by saying "Just remember man, you hit me first, now look whose bleeding."

DR: I never played Rugby but I did play fourteen years of football. In 1984, I made second team all city left guard. I recovered the fumble to set the winning field goal against Indian River (Alonzo Mourning's alma mater). Yep. My mom still has the newsclipping on her refrigerator. As for fights, I got headbutted on the nose at a party in Nags Head once and I picked the guy up by his testicles. I think I got arrested for a completely unrelated reason later that evening- but that's a story for another Death Match Tournament Review. As for this match, it wasn't watcha call transcendent or anything. It veers more into the listless wad of suck territory. The stapling of Rugby Thug's stomach hits too close to home for a lot of the live audience and for fat reviewers typing at the moment.

AXL ROTTEN VS. MEAN MITCH PAGE-TAIPEI DEATH MATCH

TKG: This is actually watchable compared to the two previous matches. I really don't understand the booking of the quarterfinals deathmatch gimmicks. Staple gun, Taipei death and even table match; require way too much wrestling between the gimmicks. These first three matches could really use more gimmicks to hide the actual workers.

PAS: They do a whole "Mean Mitch Page earns the legend's respect" deally in this match. Page is enthusiastic but relatively incompetent. Axl at least seems to try during this match, although a Taipei death match is a cool concept but relatively unwatchable, as it makes it hard to work much of a match or throw good punches. Much like a ropes on fire match, in the "better on paper, then in the ring" category.

DHR: I saw this on paper and it didn't look good. I dig Mitch Page as a psychopath in the Johnny Paycheck tradition so it liked it more than I should have. It lacked action. More of a Stand and Carve styled match. Mercifully short is a big upside. Couldn't hate this match and I wanted to.

NECRO BUTCHER VS 2 TUFF TONY-STAPLE GUN MATCH

TKG: I like both these guys. Dean apparently really likes this match and dislikes the Mondo vs. Flo match. If I understand his argument its that Mondo doesn't sell enough as he does tend to pop back up, and that this match is all about the selling. I'll agree with him that Necro Butcher does really cool looking selling. That said they essentially work the "what will it take to finish him" type match with Necro Butcher playing the guy who just won't give up. They do it well, but I generally feel that that storyline (outside of tag matches) is pretty much a dead end. There also is a little too much hair dragging brawling for my taste. Lots of cool visuals in this match. Necro Butcher takes a nice bump into a fan built contraption. Necro Butcher does a light bulb assisted headbutt, which looks nutty. Butcher also bites the thumbtacks out of Tony's scalp...just a real sickening cool visual.

PAS: I liked this a ton too on rewatching it. Necro is the real deal, as he really stands out among the guys here. This is face v. face as well, and I think it could have worked better if 2 Tough was a heel, as the beating would have looked more sadistic. Necro one ups Insanity's King's Cross bump by doing it on lightbulbs. The Missing Link lightbulb headbutt is just swanky. This got a little All Japan in the finisher kick out category, but it was hell of fun. I need more Necro Butcher on tape he is legit.

DHR: This might be the best US Garbage match ever. I need to rewatch Supreme vs Kronus, but I'm thinking this one wins because it is inventive and cool as opposed to just astoundingly sick and ghastly. This was all dynamic and shit- with all the trite shots with weapons that stinked up the earlier matches NOW taking on a whole new meaning in this match. The spots fucking POP RIGHT OUT like they are supposed to, like they don't in most of the other matches because these two set them up really well. 2 tuff Tony is like a garbage Frank the Tank Parker or something. They start with knife edged chops and it helps narrow the gap in the veiwer's mind of the size difference. The first big spot into the Bulb coated table is spectacular and sets up Tony's STAPLER ADVANTAGE! Tony leans into the missed Lariat into the post to make the COOL ASS SHIT YET SIMPLE SANDWHICH OF STEEL CHAIRS BODY SLAM ON THE FLOOR by Necro Butcher. I freaked out at the simple lines and elegance. Tony keeps selling the damage when NecroButcher does the cool looking as shit Headbutt Avec Les Bulb du Fluorescent. It's fucking Balls Out. Tony elbows his way to a transition to offense and still sells the damage as he drags himself into the ring. Necrobutcher staples Tony's lil tony housed in his

leather pants to set up the sharp looking Lygerbomb onto a sheet of metal. A lowblow and Tony crushes said sheet over Butcher's head, and he does the fucking NASTY AS ALL FUCK looking dropkick into the sheet of metal that he holds up himself upon arrival into NecroButcher's face- thus avoiding the stupidity of the Van Dam blight to wrestling. It is Ohtani-like in it's beauty and precision. Fucking beautiful. NecroButcher hits a desperation Western Lariat as Tony reenters the ring but doesn't have enough left to hit a powerbomb. Tony counters into a fucking SPECTACULAR Reverse Gory Bomb variation onto a batch of fluorescent lightbulbs that explode perfectly! . NecroButcher and Tony exchange these really great looking strikes (though Butcher hits a weak looking kick). I guess this the walking section tom speaks of- as Tony elbows Butcher in the stomach all the way over to NecroButcher headbutting Tony into position for a suplex onto the steps... uh... I forgot to see any "hair dragging brawling". Tony gets on offense by countering a lariat into a powerslam onto the steps. A shot to the throat to set up the only weak spot- the legdrop onto NecroButcher who is equipped with bulbs in his pants- which looked flashy but didn't look like it actually hurt. Tony ties Butcher up in the ropes and starts bashing him over the head with bulbs and goes out to set up something to suplex Butcher through. With the Barbed-wire board snugly secured on the folding chairs. Tony drags Butcher to the apron and tries to suplex him over the toprope but NecroButcher reverses it and suplexes Tony into the ring to allow Tony to be suplexed through the board instead. NecroButcher fucks it up and Tony ends going back first into the chair- which HAD to thoroughly suck. Eitherway, I loved the living hell out of this match.

SICK NICK MONDO VS. IAN ROTTEN-LIGHT TUBE TABLES FANS BRING THE WEAPONS MATCH

TKG: There were a bunch of idiots who were pimping Shane McMahon vs. Kurt Angle street fight as a really well worked hardcore match between a talented bumper and a wrestler with legit amateur background. I didn't pimp it that way, I pimped it as a must see for its horrific missed spots. Well those idiots need to see Rotten vs. Mondo. Rotten is a legit highly ranked ex-amateur wrestler, and Mondo is known for great spots and bumps. Rotten is a smarter garbage worker than Angle, as he understands better how to use the props and makes (at least in this match) better decisions to protect his opponents. And Mondo is so, so much more than Shane. I've already heaped the praise on Mondo once in this review and once in live show report. So go back and read that. The match starts in ring with a collar and elbow lock up. They work a top wristlock into an arm drag a bunch of standing switches reinforcing Ian's amateur background. Mondo is able to roll the larger Ian into a leg submission, which Ian reverses. Mondo is allowed to get mat based offense, but Ian is clearly the superior. In Shane/ Angle there were tons of credibility destroying spots where Shane was allowed to outwrestle Angle. In Ian/Mondo, Mondo is allowed to demonstrate his in ring wrestling skill without destroying credibility of the match. They both do a collar and elbow into ropes followed by clean break up spot to show mutual respect. This is followed up by another series of standing switches, which Ian dominates and eventually takes into a headlock. At this point Mondo is forced to throw strikes and punches his way out of headlock. They do a criss cross into an Ian dropkick followed by another criss cross into a Mondo kick that sends Ian out of ring. A full third of the match was in ring. Since Ian has demonstrated his in ring dominance as a legit amateur, Mondo seeing Ian out of ring quickly takes advantage of this opportunity by diving onto Ian. Once Ian is down

outside the ring, Mondo is left to think about what his next course of action should be. He looks at the downed Ian, and thinks back to his training at Al Snow's gym; "Damnit even Bionic J didn't have bosoms this big". Mondo goes to his bread and butter, hitting Ian with fan built weapons, in between punching and kicking at Ian. He can't outwrestle Ian so he's got to go to the weapons. Ian gets quick spurts of offense on the floor, set up by either amateur style clubbing forearms or snapmares. But Mondo is allowed to control on the outside. They both do a good job improvising around the weapons the fans provide. Eventually Mondo thinks he has enough momentum that he can set up ladder to the balcony and the light tube table. This gives the downed Ian enough time to recover and go after Mondo. Mondo climbs the ladder and challenges Ian to come up after him. Mondo then proceeds to further wear down Ian by kicking him at the ladder top. Mondo gets cocky and forgets that its already been proven that he shouldn't lock up with Ian (the superior wrestler). Mondo goes for an Irish whip which Ian reverses sending Mondo off the balcony through the light tube table. Ian understands prop wrestling better than Angle and allows his opponent to control his own bump. Ian hobbles down the ladder to pin Mondo. Having been declared the victor, Ian extends his hand to the downed Mondo, lifts Mondo up with loving arms and carries him back to the ring. Adding an extra bit of symmetry to the match, Ian rolls Mondo in ring (where Ian had dominated earlier) while he stands out of ring (where Mondo had dominated). Ian then gets on the stick and puts over Mondo as the future, and Mondo puts over Ian as a legend. A beautiful story well told. Shane McMahon jerks off at night wishing he and Angle could have done something a tenth as effective.

PAS: What he said. As an addendum, that ludicrous lightbulb table bump seems to be a Mondo staple, as he breaks it out a bunch on the CZW tape I saw. That really should be saved for special occasions.

DHR: Ian was fun on the mat. This match is fucking great upon second veiwing. They should have said "Fuck the gimmicks" and just brawled like they did for most of the match since it carried the body of the match better than the stunts ever could. I don't know about the depth of the story you freaks got out of it. This definately got better the second time I watched it.

SEMI-FINALS

SUICIDE KID VS. ROLLIN HARD-BARBED WIRE, TAIPEI SALT DEATH MATCH

TKG: Suicide Kid vs. Rollin Hard.!! WHY?? The longest seven minute match I can remember. Suicide Kid is pretty over with the crowd and that seems to be his major skill. He keeps getting stuck in these face vs. face matches that don't capitalize on it Rollin Hard at least got to work against heels for the last two matches. Kid is stuck in face v. face, that force attention onto his ringwork. I mean CHRIST ON A CAT!!! NO ONE NEEDS to see this.

PAS: If Rollin Hard wasn't so offensive, I would be able to focus on how much he sucks in the ring. He can never shine as a shitty wrestler until he dumps the gimmick.

DHR: Suicide kid could develop into a good little wrestler in the near future. Not yet and not in THIS hideous match- though he does show all the spunk you'd ever wanna see.

MEAN MITCH PAGE VS CORPORAL ROBINSON--BALCONY DEATH MATCH

TKG: Robinson got a buy into the semis due to Hidoh being injured. This may be the best match of the semis. Really simple psyche. You need to get to balcony, you need to get opponent to balcony you need to push him off and pin him. I continue to enjoy Robinson's work and Page does an ok job trying to protect Robinson on the finish. Essentially this is like a coalminers glove match except instead of getting glove from top of pole to pin opponent, you get opponent to top of pole and push him off. For essentially an on-a-pole-match, I have no problems with this match. There is one disturbing moment during match where Mean Mitch Page crawls past a guy who seems to be sporting an erection, that's my one problem with this match.

PAS: Robinson is one of the best garbage workers in this fed. While Page's willingness to die a hideous death makes up for his basic crappiness as a worker. I think the booking went wrong here, as they really could have used Robinson as a anchor in the final, and it wouldn't be such a mess. Robinson seems to know how to craft a match, while the three guys in the final don't.

DHR: This was FAR more like one of those "Capture The Flag Scaffold Matches" but with a far larger payoff. Not a match at all actually. This was more like the opening credits to The Fall Guy. I'm not one to kiss and tell but I been seen with Farraaaaaaaaahhh....

IAN ROTTEN VS. NECRO BUTCHER—FLAMING TABLES MATCH

TKG: Necro Butcher continues to deliver. He and Ian exchange stiff forearms and nice headbutts. Necro does the headbutt to light tube again. Unfortunately Ian can't quite lift Necro to powerbomb him through the flaming table. Instead it looks like Ian just lifted Necro high enough, to ram his head into the table edge. Post match Ian is a bloody mess. I never really understood why Ian and Axl were given British punk gimmicks. There was no way to buy that gimmick. Post-match Ian with his new haircut and red stripe painted through middle of his face with blood, I could actually buy Ian with a New Wave gimmick. He could be a replacement drummer for Adam and the Ants. If he ever gets a WWF gig they should have him as a lead singer for New Wave band. For the first time in my life, I can actually picture Ian at 32 singing "Mirror In the Bathroom", "She Makes Me Quiver", and "Do You really Want To Hurt Me".

PAS: Whatever you have to say about Ian Rotten, he knows how to book to protect himself and keep himself over. He wrestles four matches in this tourney, he looks like a hero badass to his crowd by pummeling the fag, and proving to everyone who comes to this show, that just because they get a strange feeling in their crotches from watch shirtless men make each other bleed, doesn't make em poofy. Then he put himself with the two best workers and biggest bumpers in the tourney so he can do as little as possible, then he makes the final a three way, in a type of match which precludes anyone from having to take a big bump. Then he gives a teary speech and brings out his family, he is quite a genius in his little realm, if Helmsley exchanged HGH for Krispy Kreme and didn't use rubber barbed wire, he would be Ian Rotten.

DHR: NecroButcher is GREAT in this. It would have been actually good if Ian could keep up at all. A comparison to DDP in the Benoit feud is better than the HHH comparison, I would say.

FINALS

IAN ROTTEN VS MEAN MITCH PAGE VS ROLLIN HARD- HOUSE OF PAIN MATCH

TKG: Ian comes to the ring looking less New Wave and more like the original bass player from the Exploited. He looks like he's about to sing backup on "Lets Start a War Said Maggie One Day" which would kind of be appropriate for this setting. Instead he shocked me by looking at Mean Mitch Page and Rollin Hard, the two men he loves most, and began to sing in a more soulful country vein. Ian, with a light tube in his hand, about to break it over Page, whispers an explanation to Page:" You see Love is like a broken light tube over your head, love is a bloody thing, love is a stinging thing, love is a sharp dangerous uncontrollable thing, love it is a burning thing" I suddenly realized what this was all about. One of the things I don't like about John Woos American movies, is he is never able to capture that sense of melodrama that all of his Japanese movies have. The violence in his Japanese movies is all about an expression of loyalty and love between men. That subtext to the violence just isn't there in America. But the subtext is here, in southern Indiana. Pondo then hits Ian with a tube: "Yes Love is a bloody thing, as we stand in this light tube ring" Suddenly the young Page understood it all as he was launched head first into the tubes. He understood the covenant he made with these two men, he understood his motivations: "Bound by wild desire, I fell into a ring of fire" And Ian and the fans that surrounded the ring, tears in their eyes, chimed in on chorus:

"I fell into a burning ring of fire
I went down, down and the glass flew higher
And it buu-rns! Burns! Burns!
The ring of fire, the ring of fire"

Page and Hard beat on each other while Rotten built an elaborate constrution, knowing full well that he himself would get thrown through it.

The taste of love is sweet, when hearts like ours meet
I fell for you like a child. Oh the fire rang wild.

It burns, it burns.....

Not really a good match, but one of the more powerful and most elaborate expressions of male loyalty and love that I've ever seen. I dare you to watch it, without getting a little choked up. Post match Ian brings out his family his trainees, all of the participants from day two, and many of the participants from day one. He expresses his thanks to all of the wrestlers and fans. He expresses his love for his family. Everyone acknowledges them. Ian's eldest son seems a little embarrassed to be paraded in front of all these people. I have a feeling that he writes far better poetry than Jake Roberts' daughter.

PAS: Lots of fat guys hitting each other with glass. This was again hurt by a lack of hate, it was like some creepy new age male bonding ritual with glass lightbulbs. The end was pretty great as Ian thanks everyone in the tourney and thanks the people in the crowd, including the IWA rat. God IWA rat must be like being an unfilmed German Shicster film actress. I would think few things would be more base then anal sex with Mean Mitch Page. I see what these guys do in public, can you picture what the romance must be like. Her stepdaddy must have done some bad, bad things.

DHR: This match was fucking horrible. I like your story a lot more, Tom.

EAGLE PRO-WRESTLING Independent Cruiser Class Tournament 07/23/2000
(PART 1 OF 14)
(by DEAN RASMUSSEN)

Each week until DVDVR #144, I will do a different match- in sequence- from this tournament. I'm intending to make this most analyzed piece wrestling tape ever analyzed. Please join the STOKEDness of it all.

Scott Mailman has the (I'm assuming "deeply Yakuza-based") connections to bring ME, the beloved reviewer of the Professional wrestling, the fine fine two-bit Japanese Indie wrestling that usually delivers the goods more often than their overpriced brethren wrestling a match against Brian Johnstone over at the Tokyo Dome. I was TORQUED about this tournament from the first mention of it's existence last year. Mailman was pretty sure that it wasn't gonna be available on tape- ending up like so many great Yume Factory unrecorded cards of recent times- BUT. THEN. IT SHOWS UP. And all fans of young Japanese men in the coolest masks in Asia flying into the crowd of 120 in attendance, we cheer a manly cheer of love, love for the Professional Wrestling in all of its beautiful flavors. Revel in the fact that I stole the matchlist directly from Scott's page. YOUR FIRST MATCH.

First Round: Quarter Final: Asian Cougar (Free Agent) vs The Great Takeru (IWA-Japan): Great Takeru has always been a perfectly fine wrestler- lowgrade highspots, decent on the mat, can work a match- everything you look for but not automatically look forward too. Cougar is one of my faves because of matches like this. He is a whole bunch of spots but ANYONE with an inkling of how to put them together into a coherent match can guide him straight to the upper echelon. Oh wait- fuck coherence, this is great because they fucking KILL each other with highspots. Actually, coherence is sorta there because Takeru is really good at setting up Asian Cougar's Red-mask-bedecked running Somersault Tope one minute in and stalling long enough outside to let the effect sink in. Takeru makes a quick comeback with a sluggish armdrag and plancha. Cougar fires back with the Catapult Plancha over the ringpost from the opposite apron to floor- crushing the comically bemasked King of The IWA Juniors. Asian Cougar flies throught the chairs like a MAN! They mill over to the stage- a stage that will harken the gentle veiwer back to his halycon days of getting that perfect attendance award in 4th grade- and Takeru does the Necros-Stagedive-Somersault-Cappou-Kick to the floor off the stage onto a killed dead Asian Cougar. Asian Cougar sells the damage as Takeru hits a nice leg lariat for two, which he

follows up with a Brainbuster and THE IMPOSSIBLY GREAT TOPROPE SNAPMARE~!~!~!~!~!
Yes, it was a TOPROPE SNAPMARE! Somehow, Cooger kicks out at two. Takeru misses on a moonsault and Cooger get a two count out of a La Majistral. An Irish Whip, a Corner Leg Lariat and LET THE LEGDROPZ BEGIN! Then they completely botch whatever they were trying to do FOR A TWO COUNT! Takeru does a standing Frankensteiner and they do some comically inept nearfalls. Asian Cougar does a Dos Caras-level preposterous submission, and we bid farewell to my new favorite Indie Juniors Tourney for another issue.

NEXT TIME: First Round: GENTARO (WYF) vs Nagase-Kancho (TAMA)

YOUR WRESTLER OF THE WEEK

***** LIONESS ASUKA!!!!!!! *****

Lioness Asuka vs. Kyoko Inoue - Jd' (8/22/99 - TWF & WWWA Titles) (Rippa)

These two have wrestled for what has seemed a million times and this is one of the most memorable of their series - as it was to be the final match in their serious. Plus, we go BROADWAY DADDY!!!! If I had more time and a little more confidence in my memory, I would rattle on about their other matches but I will try to contain myself. (I could also prattle on about how foolish it was to book this match when there was a ton of other wrestling going on this day - Onita/Tenryu team, Arsion's Zion '99, etc...) The thing that was so astounding about Lioness was that she always brought out the best in Inoue. These two have had, at max, one or two bad matches, and that is probably being a little tough. Whatever problems you may or may not have with Kyoko - it is always worth your time to watch the matches against Lioness. This is joined in progress and I still wonder if the full 60 minutes are somewhere on tape. I haven't seen it but I am an idiot. They still show - fuck - maybe 35 - 40 minutes of it. We join it after Inoue has already been misted, which was the finish of one the previous matches. So we have already glossed over that bit of psychology. Basically, Inoue gets her ass beaten for a long time yet she manages to kick out of everything. The most memorable part was Lioness tossing Inoue out of the balcony and then footstomping her through a table off the balcony. Which, of course, is my big problem with the match - the balcony toss and super hurty foot stomp WASN'T enough to get the pinfall and they still wrestled for like 15 more minutes. That is not to mention the couple of times Kyoko does he infamous "pop-up" sells. Still they bring the beatdown on each other. You could also find fault in going a full 60 minutes when both ladies relied on the same few moves (they were a mighty number of clotheslines and powerbombs thrown) but I didn't mind that as much because they still looked as hurty and effective 55 minutes in. Sixty minutes is a hell of a long time to wrestle and this was better than some other hour matches that I have seen (Hart vs. Michaels springs to mind). I am not a fan of draws so I still didn't like the ending per se. Some might like the idea that the fact that Lioness and Kyoko had been so even through the years that the draw was appropriate. I like some more closure and I also think it helps build to whatever may happen later down the road.

Lioness Asuka vs. Kyoko Inoue - GAEA (Aired 5/12/01, Taped 4/29/01) (Rippa)

I can't recall a match between the two between the last match and this one. See, you could have built the whole revenge factor and you could.... aaahhh none of you care. A few years and

many calories have passed Kyoko's lips, but this was still a fun little affair. Better than some of Inoue's other GAEA showings during that time period. Of course, this match is joined in progress too. It also had the misfortune of being on the same card as the mind-blowing awesome Hokuto/Satomura match. Well, Lioness lays in a beating of Kyoko again. In fact there were times where the beatings of the two matches seemed to blend together (advice - don't watch two Kyoko Inoue matches in a row). Like there is one moment where Lioness mashes Kyoko's nose in with a kick and there is an astoundingly great camera shot of it - I just can't for the life of me remember which match it was in. It is really sad to see that Inoue has let her go so much that Lioness can barely get her up for a powerbomb. The ending left me a little cold as Lioness misses the mist spot and Kyoko hits a lariat for the win. I had a hard time believing that Lioness could stay down after that one lariat after the punishment she had taken in the match and previous matches the two had. As I said, this was right there and completely forgettable. Did I mention that you need to go watch Hokuto/Satomura match?

Crush Gals- Lioness Aska/Chigusa Nagayo vs. Jaguar Yokota/ Devil Masami- 9/84 Yokohama Bunka Gym-2/3 Falls 1984 Tag League Final (DEAN RASMUSSEN)

Aska and Jaguar are probably the two greatest female wrestlers ever and make a good case for two best wrestlers ever. Here they are in 1984 with a the teen superstar Chigusa and the legendary and newly-revised Devil Masami. I'm not sure of the back story but Jaguar's shoulder is all taped up as she sets the pace early with two nearfalls via lucha roll-ups in quick succession on Lioness and then moves straight into a Butterfly Suplex to a tag with Devil to segueway into Devil's power offense. Lioness counters out of a Jaguar armbar and hits a drop toehold and starts going after the shoulder. Devil comes in and buys time for Jaguar by smacking Chigusa around with pretty much the same offense she has now. Lioness procures the Sharp-shooter and Chigusa applies the Octopus Hold as the story of the match is that Jaguar is the injured veteran and the up-and-coming punks want to take her out quickly without the trouble of having Devil beat the living fuck out of them along the way. Devil is a monster when she is in to make up for the Ricky Morton vs the Four Horsemen storyline of Jaguar nursing the shoulder. Yes, 80s AJW is the BEST wrestling in the MOTHERFUCKING WORLD. Joshi rules the goddamn world. Chigusa is total bitch, doing a multitude of spinning kicks into Jaguar's shoulder as Devil seethes with anger. Jaguar, being the motherfucking QUEEN, does all these shoulderblocks with her good shoulder to make the hot tag, allowing Devil to crush Chigusa with a very Arn Andersom-like Arsenal of face-busters. She foresakes pre-dating the future Horseman by hitting the La Tapitia. Jaguar does a flying crossbody and toasts her shoulder even more. Lioness starts dropping knees on it like a savage and the match is stopped because Jaguar c! an't go on.

The tape then goes straight to the rematch when Jaguar is 100%. Jaguar and Chigusa hit a batch of reversals until Jaguar gets the advantage to tag in the angry Devil who starts slamming Lioness all over the ring. Jaguar is pissed as she starts stretching the fuck out of Lioness. The AJW in 80s was alllllll about the hate and segment where Jaguar and Lioness are slapping the shit out of each other is absolute MAGIC. They get Lioness in the corner and do a SUPER Horseman stompdwn and I wept. Devil misses a NINETEEN EIGHTY-FOUR ROLLING GUILLOTINE and Lioness finally tags in Chigusa. Chigusa get the fuck beaten out of her for a

while as Jaguar and Devil are working stiff as motherfuckers. Jaguar has the look of contempt while applying the Abdominal Stretch that you can't teach at a wrestling school. It tells you the whole story- "the upstarts have crossed the line and NEED TO BE BEATEN TO DEATH"- and then Jaguar and Devil carry it out. Chigusa tells her own story of fighting spirit against astoundingly bitchy odds, as she gets them to an offensive transition to allow for double teams on Devil. Chigusa is flashy with the kicks but Lioness is a fucking female 1988 Barry Windham hitting the Superplex for the first fall. That's the key to the Crush Gals- Chigusa was all the charisma and flashiness, Lioness was all the hate and violence and toughness and body of the work usually. Devil gets her team on offense by punching Chigusa in the throat in what may be the finest moment in wrestling history. Jaguar hits a picture perfect dropkick and a Tombstone. As Chigusa kicks out, Jaguar makes the face of "Why don't you DIE already, you little bastard!" Chigusa counters out with fucking BEAUTIFUL Capture Suplex and escapes to make a tag. Chigusa hits a tope as Lioness holds Jaguar, but Devil catches Chigusa as she comes back in throws her over the top rope onto Lioness like Joe LeDuc throwing Jerry Lawler o! nto to the oak table. Jaguar gathers up Lioness and says, "FINISH HER!" as she throws Lioness into the ring to Devil. Devil suplexes her in and then gives her a jumping Powerbomb for the pin. So this is the greatest match I've ever seen. The third fall starts with Lioness and Devil in a Roman knucklelock. Lioness hits a belly to back Suplex. Chigusa can't overpower Devil enough to stop her from tagging. Jaguar misses kicking Chigusa and Chigusa sweeps the leg and applies a Scorpion Deathlock. Jaguar escapes but Chigusa crushes her with a German. Chigusa does a cool-ass Front Facelock Suplex into a Bridge for two. Lioness hits the Giant Swing and tags out. Jaguar reverses the tide by turning a Chigusa Quebradora into a Cross Body. Devil does a top rope facesmasher to set up the BALLS TO THE WALL Jaguar Top rope Double Underhook Suplex for the win. GREAT motherfucking Match. GREAT GREAT GREAT GREAAAT MOTHERFUCKING MATCH. MOTHERFUCKING GREAT MATCH. Jaguar will never get smoked in this time period, but it's important to see who Lioness had to technically match-up with in the ring. The fact that Lioness could hang with Jaguar in 1984 should clue you in as to what kind of great worker she was developing into. It is also important to see the kind of Old School ways they heated this match up. The dickish assault on Jaguar's shoulder previously, the revenge and hatred it produced in Jaguar, the way Devil plays her role as avenger to her injured friend- it's straight out of the South and it's great . Two great tag teams, two of the best ever. Jesus, this match is fucking great. Goddamn, quit reading this and go get this match from Loreface.

NEXT TIME: God, Dean and Marcel are going to Canada so who knows when or what is going to happen. Pray for them.

"Six simple words: I'm not gay, but I will learn."

- Homer Simpson

THE DEATH VALLEY PLAYBOYS.

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